Aalto University
School of Business

PURSUIT OF HOPPINESS

Qualitative study of Finnish craft beer hobbyists' consumer identity

Master's Thesis
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Marketing
Fall 2016

Aalto University
School of Business

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Abstract of master's thesis

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Title of thesis Pursuit of Hoppiness: Qualitative study of Finnish craft beer hobbyists' consumer identity

Degree Master of Science

Degree programme Marketing

Thesis advisor Sammy Toyoki

Year of approval 2016 **Number of pages** 67 **Language** English

Abstract

Popularity of craft beer drinking is growing fast globally, and in Finland. Despite the global decline in beer sales, the number of Finnish craft breweries has doubled since 2008, every month a new Finnish craft brewery is founded, and the global media talks about a craft beer boom. Yet, the context of Finnish craft beer consumer world completely lacks previous academic research.

The purpose of this study is to be an initial explorative study of Finnish craft beer hobbyists and their consumer identities. At the same time this study aims to give a glimpse of understanding into the transformation of localized cultural capital into broader cultural capital by looking at the role of social status and cultural capital in consumer identity building. To accomplish this, the research builds on the theories of consumer identity, consumer identity work, subcultures of consumption, social status, and cultural capital.

Qualitative research method is chosen for this exploratory study. The research builds on social constructionist paradigm, subjectivist epistemology, and structutralist methodology. The method of the study is social psychological discourse analysis that aims to find and analyze the identities, subjective positions and interpretative repertoires of craft beer drinkers. For the study semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight Finnish craft beer hobbyists.

The findings of this study introduce the different interpretative repertoires the interviewees use in their identity talk to build their consumer identity. The hobbyists use different subject positions when talking about the hobby, and thus reveal what kind of identity they seek and with what kind of discourses it is built. This study shows that craft beer hobbyists see themselves as (1) experimenters and explorers, as (2) analysts and critics, as (3) hedonists and connoisseurs, and as (4) teachers and gurus. Together the four interpretative repertoires give a comprehensive picture of an identity of well knowledged, analytic yet hedonistic person, who has taste and whom others look up to.

The findings and interpretations lead to discussion that craft beer hobbyism a vehicle for consumers to incorporate taste into their habitus and increase their cultural capital. It is argued that craft beer subculture is quite an easy-to-access community, that offers a cheap and a simple to understand way to gain cultural capital. These characteristics could be reasons behind the trending of craft beer hobbyism, and a reflection of our current postmodern consumer society. It is discussed how marketplace fragmentation and the abandoning of old societal identities has led to boom of consumer subcultures used to build multifaceted consumer identities.

Keywords consumer culture, cultural capital, craft beer, identity work, consumption subculture

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Maisterintutkinnon tutkielman tiivistelmä

Tekijä Markus Helaniemi

Työn nimi Kvalitatiivinen tutkimus suomalaisten pienpanimo-olutharrastajien kuluttajaidentiteetistä

Tutkinto Kauppatieteiden maisteri

Koulutusohjelma Markkinointi

Työn ohjaaja Sammy Toyoki

Hyväksymisvuosi 2016 **Sivumäärä** 67 **Kieli** englanti

Tiivistelmä

Pienpanimo-oluen juomisen, maistelun ja harrastamisen suosio on kasvanut nopeasti sekä maailmalla, että Suomessa. Huolimatta oluen kokonaiskulutuksen laskemisesta suomalaisten pienpanimoiden määrä on kaksinkertaistunut vuodesta 2008, ja joka kuukausi Suomeen perustetaan uusi pienpanimo. Maailmanlaajuinen media puhuukin pienpanimo-olutbuumista. Tästä huolimatta aiempi akateeminen tutkimus suomalaisista pienpanimo-oluen kuluttajista puuttuu.

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on olla alustava eksploratiivinen tutkimus suomalaisista pienpanimo-oluen kuluttajista ja heidän kuluttajaidentiteetistään. Samaan aikaan tutkimus pyrkii antamaan lisäymmärrystä paikallisen ja alakulttuuriin rajatun kulttuurisen pääoman (field-dependant cultural capital) muuttamisesta yleiseksi kulttuuriseksi pääomaksi (general cultural capital) ja habitukseksi. Tutkimus rakentuu kuluttajakulttuurin, kuluttajaidentiteetin, identiteettityön, sosiaalisen aseman, ja kulttuurisen pääoman teorioiden varaan.

Tämän alustavan tutkimuksen metodi on kvalitatiivinen. Tutkimuksen lähtökohtina ovat konstruktionistinen paradigma, subjektivistinen epistemologia ja strukturalistinen metodologia. Tutkimusmetodina käytetään puolistrukturoitua haastattelua. Yhteensä kahdeksaa suomalaista pienpanimo-oluen harrastajaa haastateltiin tutkimusta varten.

Tutkimuslöydökset esittelevät diskursseja eli puhumisen tapoja, joita haastatellut pienpanimo-olutharrastajat käyttävät puhuessaan harrastuksestaan ja rakentaessaan identiteettiään. Haastatellut asettuvat erilaisiin subjektin asemiin puheessaan ja näin paljastavat millaista identiteettiä he hakevat ja millaisille diskursseille se on rakentunut. Löydösten mukaan pienpanimo-olutharrastajat näkevät itsensä (1) tutkijoina ja kokeilijoina, (2) analyytikkoina ja kriitikoina, (3) hedonisteina ja laatutietoisina sekä (4) opettajina ja guruina. Yhdessä nämä neljä diskurssia antavat kuvan tietävästä ja osaavasta, analyyttisestä mutta nautiskelevasta ihmisestä, jolla on makua ja jota muut katsovat ylöspäin.

Löydösten ja tulkintojen perusteella voidaan keskustella pienpanimo-olutharrastuksen asemasta postmodernissa kuluttajayhteiskunnassa. Tutkimus pohtii harrastuksen asemaa helposti lähestyttävänä kuluttajakulttuurina. Pienpanimo-oluet tarjoavat edullisen sekä helposti opittavan ja hallittavan tavan rakentaa ja osoittaa kulttuurista pääomaa sekä parantaa sosiaalista asemaa. Tutkimus myös pohtii pienpanimo-olutharrastuksen kaltaisten kuluttajakulttuurien merkitystä sirpaloituneen kuluttajaidentiteetin rakentamisessa ja näin sen viimeaikaisen suosion mahdollisia syitä.

Avainsanat kuluttajakulttuuri, kulttuurinen pääoma, pienpanimo-olut, identiteettityö

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1. INTRODUCTION

Beer is world's third most popular drink after water and tea (Statista, 2016a), and most likely the oldest alcoholic beverage known to human. Beer has been consumed for over 10000 years, and has been on the lips of the thirsty since Neolithic humans. Today, over 1.93 billion hectoliters of beer are produced annually (Statista, 2016a) in a market dominated by large multinational brewing companies, with the three biggest corporations AB InBev, SABMiller, and Heineken producing as much as all the rest together (Statista, 2016b).

However, recently a small yet trending market phenomenon of craft beer hobbyism has started to enter the market. It has made beer drinking cool and even sophisticated, and given birth to huge amount of microbreweries across Finland and the globe. What is this phenomenon? What could be the reasons for its success? How is consumer culture and identity intertwined with craft beer hobbyism? This Master's Thesis (*pro gradu*) looks at these questions.

1.1 Context

Craft beer drinking and popularity is growing fast globally. While the overall global beer market and production has declined (Terazono, 2016), craft beer production keeps growing. In Europe, beer sales have declined 2,6% in five years, but the number of breweries has grown 88% in the same time (Brewers of Europe, 2015). In Finland, the number of craft breweries has doubled since 2008, and the number keeps growing (Iltalehti, 2016).

The interest towards craft beer and craft beer hobbyism has soared in the recent years around the world (see e.g. Terazono, 2016; Passy, 2015; Randazzo, 2016; Niemi, 2016). In Finland, the craft beer craze has been in public discussion for the past few years (see e.g. Kenttämaa, 2016; Sandell, 2016; Niemi, 2016; Mälkiä, 2016; Koskinen & Liimatainen, 2016; Drake, 2016), and the The Finnish Federation of the Brewing and Soft Drinks Industry has been talking about a Finnish craft beer boom (Niemi, 2016). The trending hobby can be held at least partly responsible for the brewery-friendly change in the Finnish alcohol law taking effect in 2017 (see The Finnish Federation of the Brewing and Soft Drinks Industry, 2016; The Finnish Microbreweries' Association, 2016; Korkki, 2016; Helaniemi, 2016).

Craft beer hobbyists are mostly young, highly educated, and urban people (Gómez-Corona et al., 2015; Murray & O'Neill, 2012) who enjoy drinking and tasting craft beers from different breweries, analyzing, comparing, and evaluating beers, as well as going to beer bars, pubs, and breweries, beer events, festivals, and tastings.

The author of this study is also a member of the craft beer hobbyist subculture and an avid beer enthusiast since reaching the legal drinking age. After having witnessed the rapid growth of the hobby, the escalating media frenzy, the birth of new beer events and bars in Helsinki, and the flood of craft beers in regular supermarkets, I started to wonder if an academic study could shed some light on the possible reasons for the craft beer boom. Since the craft beer hobbyism is, like all consumer trends, primarily a socially built consumer phenomenon in the intersection of the marketplace and social meanings, the field of consumer culture theory (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005) seemed to fit the context.

As a member of the hobby I have an initial preunderstanding of the subculture, its members, values, attitudes, practices, and behaviors. This preunderstanding could be seen as a hindrance or a biasing condition, but in the case of a non-objectivist study such as this one (see chapter 4.2), the preunderstanding is not something that the researcher should dismiss or refrain from, even if they could (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 109). Instead, preunderstanding is the source of interpretation, and it provides a reference and a frame for interpretation and analysis (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 109).

1.2 Theory

This research builds on the theories of consumer identity, consumer identity work, subcultures of consumption, social status, and cultural capital. These theories are aptly suitable to approach the socially built consumer phenomenon of craft beer hobbyism.

Consumer identity and consumer identity work have been thoroughly researched in the past. Identity and self-concept have been studied for millennia, but for this study identity means simply the way people understand who they are. To maintain, build, and shape a consistent and preferable identity, people do identity work using tools and resources available for them (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Abundance of those resources are available in the modern consumer marketplace in the forms of products and brands, and people use them to build their identities by consuming, usually with a goal in mind (see e.g. Arnould & Thompson, 2005). One of the forms of identity work is identity talk that forms a major part of identity work and is in the focus of

this study (see e.g. Hunt & Miller, 1997; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Snow & Machalek, 1984). Another feature of the modern marketplace is the formation of consumption subcultures, or consumer worlds, that modern consumers take part in to further craft their identity and to feel belongingness (see e.g. Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Kates, 2002; Kozinets, 2001; Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995)

Social class and status are major factors of consumer identity, and they have been studied since the late 1800's by theorists and sociologists such as Karl Marx and Thorstein Veblen. Status is the position in the social class system assigned by others, and is closely tied to social class (see e.g. Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999). Status is gained by status consumption, or buying products that bring social status for the individuals (see e.g. Packard, 1959; Scitovsky, 1992; see Eastman et al. 1999), but in the current postmodern society status cannot be accumulated by simply buying certain products, but rather by displaying personal image and lifestyle (see Trigg, 2001). Status is gained and signaled with a "set of socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices" called cultural capital (see Holt, 1998, 3, see also Bourdieu 1984). Cultural capital is accumulated with social upbringing (Bourdieu 1986), as well as investments made in time and money to gain the correct tastes, skills, and knowledge (see Arsel & Thompson, 2010; see also Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is at the same time the sign of and the basis for class position and used to make a distinction from the lower classes with display of taste (see Bourdieu, 1984).

Cultural capital can be built within a consumption subculture, called 'field-dependent cultural capital' (see Arsel & Thompson, 2010). This localized cultural capital can be used to grow the general cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1990; see Arsel & Bean, 2013; Holt, 1998).

1.3 Purpose of the study

Firstly, the context of Finnish craft beer consumer world completely lacks previous academic research. There are some initial studies on the foreign craft beer marketplace (Ascher, 2012; Murray & O'Neill, 2012), beer style preferences (Aquilani, Laureti, Poponi, & Secondi, 2015), categorization (Wright, 2014), and attitudes and motivations (Gómez-Corona, Escalona-Buendia, Garcia, Chollet, & Valentin, 2016), as well as Finnish beer customers' relationship with beer alcohol percentage (Luukkonen, 2013). This purpose of this study is to be an initial explorative study of Finnish craft beer hobbyists and their consumer identities.

Secondly, the field of consumption subculture dependent cultural capital and its relation to broad cultural capital has got only limited research. This study aims to give a glimpse of understanding into the transformation of localized cultural capital into broader cultural capital. This study also aims to take a look at the role of social status and cultural capital in consumer identity building.

The research question of this study is:

> **What kind of identity consumers build with the new trending consumption subculture of craft beer hobbyism?**

This question is approached in the chapter 5 of Analysis and Interpretation.

The secondary research question is:

> **What is the role of cultural capital and social status in the rising popularity of craft beer hobbyism?**

This question is approached in the chapter 6 of Discussion.

1.4 Method

For this exploratory study a qualitative research was chosen to gain understanding of the socially constructed world of craft beer hobbyists. The paradigm of this study, social constructionism or the premise that the individual self is not an isolated being reflects the social settings of the context. The epistemological relationship between reality and the observer of the study is subjectivism, and the findings of the study can be thought to be created at the same time as the data is collected in the interviews. This research is studying the social systems of meaning making, and thus its methodology is structuralism.

The method of the study is social psychological discourse analysis created by Potter & Wetherell (1990), and it aims to find and analyze the identities, subjective positions and interpretative repertoires of craft beer drinkers. The method included semi-structured interviews with craft beer hobbyists about the craft beer hobby, with the aim to produce identity talk. The data was then coded into different themes of interpretative repertoires for analysis.

1.5 Findings and contributions

The findings of this study introduce the different interpretative repertoires the interviewees use in their identity talk to build their consumer identity. The hobbyists use different subject positions when talking about the hobby, and discreetly reveal the kind of identity they are building.

This study shows that craft beer hobbyists see themselves as (1) experimenters and explorers, as (2) analysts and critics, as (3) hedonists and connoisseurs, and as (4) teachers and gurus. Together the four interpretative repertoires display a well knowledged, analytic yet hedonistic person, who has taste and whom others look up to.

The findings and interpretations lead to discussion that craft beer hobbyism is a way to build and display localized cultural capital, and offers a vehicle for consumers to incorporate taste into their habitus and increase their general cultural capital. It is argued that craft beer subculture is quite an easy-to-access community, that offers a cheap and a simple to understand way to gain cultural capital, a task that maybe previously required lots of money and time.

These characteristics could be reasons behind the trending of craft beer hobbyism, and a reflection of our current postmodern consumer society. It is discussed how marketplace fragmentation and the abandoning of old societal identities has led to boom of consumer subcultures used to build multifaceted consumer identities.

This study and its findings have implications for both consumer culture scholars as well as marketers and the craft beer industry.

2. CONSUMER STATUS AND IDENTITY WORK

In this chapter academic literature relevant to the concepts of self, identity, status, and class are explored from the viewpoint of consumer research. The literature review looks at works of the classics of identity (e.g. James, Gergen, Gecas, Snow & Anderson, Sirgy), identity work, and identity talk (e.g. Belk, Alvesson et al., Snow et al. Ahuvia, McCracken, Schouten, Ibarra). The fundamentals of consumer class and status (e.g. Weber, Warner, Veblen, Eastman, Goldsmith) as well as cultural capital (e.g. Bourdieu, Holt, Lamont & Lareau) are also introduced.

It is explained that people have different selves that come together in their identity or self-concept. People tend to strive for a somewhat coherent identity, and do identity work to build, change, and maintain their identities. Status, the social position of a person, is important part of identity and people build it by gaining social capital, most importantly cultural capital.

These research fields are relevant to the research questions of this study. Craft beer hobbyism is a socially built consumer phenomenon that involves identity work, status, and cultural capital. In order to approach this interplay of consumer identity work and social status in a consumer hobby such as craft beer hobbyism, the concepts of identity work, social status, and cultural capital have to be introduced to build an interpretative framework. The literature and theories form a framework that enables the researcher to understand and make interpretations about the data from the viewpoint of consumer status and identity work (see Moisander & Valtonen 2006, p. 103).

2.1 Consumer self and identity

Self, identity, and self-concept are topics that humans have pondered for millennia. Their importance for researchers of different fields has not declined in the modern time, rather the opposite (e.g. Gecas, 1982). In today's world people use consumption and other symbolic marketplace resources to create a sense of self and build identities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

The question of the concept of self was of interest already to the early Greek philosophers. Aristotle, Plutarch, Plato, and Socrates, amongst others, studied the division of physical body and the nonphysical mind and thoughts. (Gergen, 1971, p. 5-6).

Philosophers and psychologists continued to study the body, mind, and experience of self until late 1800's. In the turn of the century William James (1890) published his works on self, and the old view of self-experience as the experience of the physical body was slowly left. (Gergen, 1971, p. 6).

James (1890) famously stated that "a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his" (279). He divided the components of self into three categories. The material self includes the body, but also all possessions and objects, as well as the immediate family. The social self is the recognition and reputation from friends, family, and other close people. Finally, the spiritual self is the sense of all the mental processes of feeling and thinking. After James different theorists and researchers argued on the definition and meaning of self and identity for decades. Different schools of thought approached the concept from different angles and there have been multiple and ambiguous understandings of self.

Gergen (1971) deems the question of 'what is self' inappropriate, since it doesn't have scientific utility. Instead, he looks at the different ways scholars have understood the concept of self during the past centuries, and uses this to build a coherent theory of the concept of self. He comes to a conclusion that self is both a process and a structure. Self is "the process by which the person conceptualizes (or categorizes) his behavior" and "the system of concepts available to the person in attempting to define himself" (p. 22–23). A person continuously evaluates his self-concepts based on his pleasure or displeasure with them, and this self-evaluation is a key determinant of his behavior (Gergen 1971).

However, Gecas (1982) argues that 'self' is the reflexive process of creating 'self-concept', or 'identity'. Self-concept is the product of this process, it's the structure of "various identities and attributes, and their evaluations, developed out of the individual's reflexive, social, and symbolic activities" (p. 4).

In their examination of past literature, Snow & Anderson (1987) come to the understanding that although identity, or self-concept, has gained importance in sociology and psychology, the term is still ambiguous. They end defining self-concept as "one's overarching view or image of her- or himself" (p. 1348). For Ibarra & Barbulescu (2010) identities are all the different meanings attached to a person by himself and others, and these identities are united to form a coherent understanding of self.

Sirgy (1982) also finds a multidimensional approach to self-concept in his literature review. He demonstrates that self has four dimensions: actual self is how person finds

himself, ideal self is how person would like to find himself, social self is how person presents himself to others, and ideal social self is how a person would like others to see him. Schouten (1991) defined self-concept as "the cognitive and affective understanding of who and what we are." He argued that self-concepts include role identities, personal characteristics, relationships, and all symbols used to create and understand oneself.

Cushman (1990) points out that self is the concept of the individual stated by a certain group, era, and culture. According to him, self is "what it is to be human" to a certain group. There is no global self, only local selves. That means that self can only be understood in the local setting, and there can be no universal theory of self. Self and identity are also in constant change through time, self-concepts can be put aside for a while, and deployed again to rebuild that aspect of self (Kleine & Kleine, 2000).

For this study, self and identity mean the way people understand who they are, what they understand to be parts of themselves. It includes the self-appointed categories of self and how they are formed, maintained and self-evaluated (Gergen, 1971). It includes the role identities and personal characteristics one attaches to himself (Schouten 1991), as well as the continuous change and development (Kleine & Kleine, 2000). Finally, we can say that 'self' and 'identity' are more or less interchangeable, and refer to how a person presents how he is (Belk, 1988).

2.2 Consumer identity work

In order to build and maintain an identity, people do identity work of various forms. Identity work as a term in sociology, psychology, and consumer research refers to the process of constructing and shaping a somewhat consistent and intact identity using tools, symbols, products, and other building blocks available to the individual (e.g. Alvesson et al., 2008; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003)

Identity work has been defined as "people's engagement in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising their identities" (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010, p. 137). Identity work refers to the activities individuals take part in to sustain an identity that sides with their self-concept (Snow & Anderson, 1987). These activities can include displaying physical items and products at home or on person (Belk, 1988), enhancing personal appearance with temporary or permanent modifications such as plastic surgery (Schouten ,1991), getting associated or disassociated with other people or groups such as a company or a religion (Snow & Machalek, 1984), experimenting with different

identities in different settings (Ibarra, 1999), and talking about personal identity through identity talk (Snow & Anderson, 1987).

Consumer culture theory, the "family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings," (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868) has been looking at the process of consumer identity work for a while. It has become clear in the past decades of research in this field that the modern consumer marketplace is the source of symbolic resources that consumers use to build their identities and make sense of themselves. Consumers are identity seekers who build their identities by consuming, usually with a goal in mind, although the goal might be vague one even to the consumer. (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Consumers might also do identity work to take their identity apart, to lay aside parts of their identity, and later rebuild their identity using the discarded self-concepts. Individual's identity work changes over time, it has different phases, and it can be repetitive in nature. (Kleine & Kleine, 2000). Identity work can be a relatively unconscious effort where the individual is somewhat unaware of the work done, usually in the cases of smooth or routinized life situations, but in most cases identity work is at least partly conscious process where identities are "achieved rather than given" (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 626).

The intriguing ability of consumer products to allow consumers to build their identities stems from the cultural meanings attached to the products. These attached meanings allow the products and ways of consumption to become symbols that consumers can use (Solomon, 1983). Different meanings can be attributed to the products based on their physical appearance, price, and packaging, but also by associations to their typical generalized user (Sirgy, 1982).

To look at the links between product images (meanings attached to products) and self-concepts in consumer identity work, Sirgy (1981; 1982) developed a self-image/product-image congruity theory to explain consumer and purchase behavior. He argued that consumers will buy products that have a similar product image to their self-image, and thus support their self-concept. Consumers will strive to have a consistency between self-image and the product images of purchased goods.

McCracken (1986) argues in his famous article that meanings are attached to goods and products by systems of meaning transformation. These systems include advertising and

the fashion markets. Consumers get access to the meanings embodied in the goods through symbolic actions of consumer rituals. These meaning transferring rituals are such as possessing and displaying the goods, or exchanging the goods as gifts. Thompson and Haytko (1997) later suggested that McCracken's model of meaning transfer is actually not dynamic and consumer centered enough, and that consumers are in a continuous interpretative dialogue about the appropriation of the cultural meanings, rather than taking the meanings as given.

One of the most famous theories in the field of consumer identity is Belk's (1988) concept of extended self. Belk argues that consumers' possessions and purchases are a direct reflection of their identity, and that actually possessions are an extension of self. The possessions make a big contribution to the consumer identity. Consumers have a "core self" or "true self" that can be extended symbolically, as in the case of an uniform, but also very concretely, as in the case of a gun. Belk continued to investigate the theory of extended self later e.g. in the contexts of collecting (Belk, 1995) and workplace decoration (Tian & Belk, 2005), and updated the concept for the new digital world (Belk, 2013).

The basic idea of using consumption as a building block of identity stands, even though Belk's idea of core self has been contested by later developments in consumer identity research. The two primary traits of recent research challenging the concept of extended self are understandings of identity as a narrative, and as a complexed and fragmented construction. (Ahuvia, 2005).

When looking at consumer identity as a narrative, consumers are thought to make sense of themselves by constructing a life story from the key moments of their life. The story connects their past to their present and future, and it includes different actors in positive or negative roles. (Ahuvia, 2005). Understanding narratives is fundamental for consumer research (Shankar, Elliott, & Goulding, 2001). Narratives are stories about the self, and they help people to make sense of the world. Narratives give meaning to different events by putting them in their place in a bigger story of life. (Polkinghorne, 1991).

Consumer identity narratives include marketplace resources, i.e. products and brands that consumers use in their life stories. These narratives can be seen as performances "in which consumers use goods to enact personalized versions of cultural scripts" (Ahuvia, 2005). Products and consumption are very important in "setting the stage" for consumers' narratives and different social roles they play in their lives. Products, and the symbols

they involve, are used by consumers to understand and define their social reality and self. (Solomon 1983).

For example, Fournier (1998) introduced the idea of consumers forming almost personal relationships with brands, and these brands and relationships affecting consumers' identity narratives and concepts of self. Another example is by Schau & Gilly (2003), who investigated how identity narratives are affected by the display of brands on personal web sites. Beech (2008) also emphasized the importance of meanings attached to objects in identity work, and argued that meanings are constructed in a social dialogue thus making identity work inherently social phenomenon.

Recent research has also studied the difficulty of maintaining a coherent consumer identity in the fragmented and complex world of today. There is abundance of choice when it comes to lifestyles and consumption options, and this can make consumption decisions and identity representation challenging for individuals. Researchers, such as Gergen (1991) and Giddens (1991) have examined how consumers struggle to build a coherent identity using the marketplace resources despite the multitude of available identities. (Ahuvia 2005).

Another interesting way to look at consumer identity projects is the concept of empty self suggested by Cushman (1990). He argues that after World War II the Western society has fragmented and become individualistic. People have lost their experiences of community and tradition, and ultimately the middle class self has become empty. This leads to lack of feeling of worth and to chronic emotional hunger, that consumers try to satisfy with endless consuming. Advertising only worsens the situation, when it tries to soothe the empty self by creating endless amount of new lifestyles for consumers to take part in.

Related to the concept of empty self is the idea of self-improvement and betterment through consumption. It is argued that humans have a sense of incompleteness that drives them to self-improvement. To maintain and reconstruct their self-concepts, and to improve themselves, humans consume products and services. (Schouten, 1991)

Markus & Nurius (1986) introduced the concept of possible self, that represents "individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming." Possible selves are the selves people would like to become, what they could become, and what they're afraid of becoming, and these selves work as

motivation for behavior. Close to, or perhaps one version of possible self is the ideal self, or “the image of oneself as one would like to be” (Sirgy, 1982, p. 288).

To achieve the possible self, individual might experiment with different provisional identities, and gather internal and external feedback from these identities. Example of provisional selves could be different sets of behaviors people take at a new job to try to fit into the organizational culture. Individuals use the feedback the receive from the provisional selves to modify their identity until the desired possible self is achieved. (Ibarra, 1999).

Identity work can take many forms such as the display of physical items, improving personal appearance, or association with social groups. One of the forms is identity talk, introduced by Snow et al. (see Snow & Anderson, 1987; Snow & Machalek, 1984). It’s been argued that considerable part of identity work is in fact identity talk (S. Hunt & Miller, 1997). In essence, identity talk is the way how people talk to create an understanding of themselves and the discourses they use when creating a sense of self. This is why all talk can be attributed to identity talk.

Identity talk is the building, affirming, and claiming of personal identity through talk and verbal expression (Snow & Anderson, 1987). It is “a discourse that reflects actors’ perceptions of a social order and is based on interpretations of current situations, themselves, and others” (S. A. Hunt & Benford, 1994, p. 492).

Hunt, Benford & Snow (1994) identified two main mechanisms in identity talk: identity avowals and identity attributions. When talking with identity avowals the individuals position themselves relative to their environment, while when talking with identity attributions they position others in relation to themselves (Hunt & Miller, 1997). When doing identity talk people “make claims to who they are, who they are not, who others are, and who others are not” (p. 70). This is why when analyzing identity talk researchers can try to understand how identities are socially constructed, and how these identity constructs are used in everyday life and discourse (Hunt & Benford, 1994).

Scholars have found different types and patterns of identity talk in their studies. Snow & Andersson (1987) identified three patterns of identity talk in their analysis of homeless people. They described distancing, embracement, and fictive storytelling. Hunt & Benford (1994) classified as many as six types of identity talk; associational declarations of belonging to a group or role, disillusionment anecdotes or stories how people came to

realizations of truth, atrocity tales of negative experiences the person wants to work against, 'personal is political' reports that make everyday life a political statement, guide narratives of moments someone helped the person understand something, and finally war stories of how person encountered hardships and fought against evil.

2.3 Consumer social class and status

Social class and status are important parts of consumer identity. Social class has been discussed and studied since the late 1800's by theorists and sociologists such as Karl Marx and Thorstein Veblen. The most important modern studies on the relationship of social classes and consumption have been done by Warner et al. in 1949 and Max Weber in 1978 (see Holt, 1998). The studies of both Warner and Weber put forward the idea that status and social class are built on consumer behavior, and can hence explain consumer actions (Holt, 1998).

Warner studied the social class criteria used by inhabitants of small American towns, and found a multidimensional understanding of social class that was built on range of moral, aesthetic, intellectual, educational, religious, ethnic, and personal behaviors. Consumption and the "correct" consumer behavior was also found to be a major player in the formation and expression of social classes and status position. (Holt, 1998).

The term "social class" was first thoroughly discussed by Max Weber in his 1978 book "Economy and Society". He built on the class theory of Karl Marx, but expanded the theory with the inclusion of "styles of life", i.e. noneconomic criteria of morals, culture, and social life that divide people into classes of different status. (Holt, 1998).

Social class is a concept closely tied to status. Status is the position in the social class system assigned by others, and a form of power within the system (Eastman et al., 1999). Social status and social class are important factors of human life, and hence help understand consumer behavior and the marketplace. Like Goldsmith, Flynn, & Eastman (1996, see O'Cass & McEwen, 2004) put it: "one important motivating force that influences a wide range of consumer behaviour is the desire to gain status or social prestige from the acquisition and consumption of goods."

Social status can be build, signaled and worked on by buying, owning, and consuming certain products and brands in certain ways (e.g. Mccracken, 1986; O'Shaughnessy, 1992, Packard, 1959, Bell et al., 1991, see O'Cass & McEwen, 2004) Consumption can

be seen as a mean of social reproduction that helps maintain and reinforce existing social hierarchies (Holt, 1998).

2.4 Cultural capital

According to the studies of Warner et al. (1949, see Holt, 1998), when people organize into social classes, they use products to mark their status and to keep the status boundaries up. Products with attached meanings (see chapter 2.2) of status in the society are consumed by individuals to gain and display status in the process of status consumption (Packard, 1959, Scitovsky, 1992, see Eastman et al., 1999). For the consumption to have the power of creating status for the individual, it has to done so that others notice it (Sirgy, 1982). This idea was studied already in the 1830's by John Rae (see Leibenstein, 1950), and in the late 1800's by Thorstein Veblen (1899). Veblen introduced and made famous the concept of conspicuous consumption, i.e. the visible buying and displaying of valuable possessions.

According to Veblen (1899) people want to have social status, and the status is gained and signaled by displaying wealth (see also Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996). Status can be displayed either by the conspicuous displaying of valuable possessions, or by having and enjoying copious free time and leisure. This wasteful consumption is the key display of wealth.

Veblen (1899) identified two types of conspicuous consumption: invidious comparison that takes place when a member of a higher status class consumes conspicuously to differentiate from lower classes, and pecuniary emulation that takes place when lower status group members emulate the consumption habits of higher status individuals to try to rise in the status system.

Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption is built on his witnessing of evolution of "leisure class" in the late 1800's America (see also O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). The members of the leisure class own property and wealth, are not required to work, and live on the work of lower classes.

Lower classes continuously try to reach the status of the higher classes, and "the result is that the members of each stratum accept as their ideal of decency the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher stratum, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal" (Veblen, 1899). This means that fashion, styles, and other consumer behavior is 'trickled down' from the high status classes to the lower classes as they try to emulate the behavior of

the leisure class (see also Trigg, 2001). This pecuniary emulation has been studied ever since, and has recently seen theories from economics and game theory been incorporated into it to understand why the affluent middle class feels unsatisfied in their economic position (see Frank, 2001).

Later theorists have built on Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption. Liebenstein (1950) looked at the theory from the viewpoint of economics, and divided consumer demand into functional demand and nonfunctional demand. Functional demand is based on the concrete functions and features of a product, while nonfunctional demand comes from external effects of social settings and peer pressure.

These external effects include *bandwagon effects* or "the extent to which the demand for a commodity is increased due to the fact that others are also consuming the same commodity", (p. 189) *snob effects* or "the extent to which the demand for a consumers' good is decreased owing to the fact that others are also consuming the same commodity", (p. 189) and *Veblen effects* of "the phenomenon of conspicuous consumption; to the extent to which the demand for a consumers' good is increased because it bears a higher rather than a lower price" (p. 189). The term 'Veblen effect' has been used since Liebenstein to describe conspicuous consumption behavior (e.g. Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996).

Later consumer behavior models have tried to take the special case of conspicuous consumption into account, even though the seemingly irrational behavior has been difficult to analyse and frame (Mason, 1984). The research has continued into modern literature (e.g. O'Cass & McEwen 2004, Bagwell & Bernheim 1996, Eastman et al. 1999), and has been especially fruitful in fashion, luxury, and international business contexts (e.g. Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Conspicuous consumption and status consumption are nowadays usually understood to mean the same model of consumer behavior, although some researchers tend to separate them into ostentatious visual display of expensive products of conspicuous consumption, and into subtler status consumption (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004).

However, the theories of status consumption and conspicuous consumption have received critique for being too simple and not fitting in the postmodern world of consumerism (Trigg, 2001). Already in the 1950's there was criticism towards Veblenian theories with the observation of 'old' American social elite's counter-snobbery, the

practice of mocking the flamboyant and opportunistic ‘new’ elite by restraining from ostentatious conspicuous consumption (Steiner & Weiss, 1951).

Changes in the world economy in the early and mid 1900’s, especially the great depression of 1930’s, made it unacceptable for the leisure class to show their wealth in the same way as before (Mason, 1998, see Trigg, 2001). Economic growth after World War II created a rising middle class with money to spend, which made it difficult for the rich to make a distinction with just the display of wealth (Canterbery, 1998, see Trigg, 2001).

There is also critique towards the Veblenian ‘trickle down’ movement of consumption patterns. It is argued that this view is too narrow, as consumption behaviors can also travel upwards in the social hierarchy, from the lower classes to the higher ones, and fluctuate freely between classes (Trigg, 2001).

The approach of conspicuous consumption is “argued to be irrelevant and out of date in relation to the new cultural makeup of contemporary consumer society” (Trigg, 2001, p. 104). The postmodern social world is now divided according to lifestyles and consumption behaviors rather than simply wealth, and more importance is placed on the display of personal image rather than display of pecuniary resources. (Trigg, 2001). Consuming has become an activity with the purpose in itself gained from pleasures and tastes, so a more diverse theory is needed to explain consumer behavior between status classes (Holt, 1998).

The work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984; 1986) can be seen as a modern advancement on the Veblenian works of conspicuous consumption (Trigg, 2001). Bourdieu (1986) argues that social status is gained, signaled, and produced with social resources he calls capitals. The capitals are in essence accumulated labor, actual or social, and their distribution reveals the construction of the social world. These forms of capital are of importance, since “it is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 83).

Bourdieu (1986) identifies three types of capital. Economic capital is simply money and other liquid assets and monetary wealth. Social capital refers to the actual or potential resources stemming from a durable network of interpersonal relationships and memberships in groups, and varies in the size and quality of the network.

The third form of capital is cultural capital. It is perhaps the most important and interesting of the forms of capital, as it has improved the understanding of how distinctions between social classes are maintained (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Cultural capital is at the same time the sign of and the basis for class position. Members of the higher class positions signal their status and make a distinction from the lower classes with display of taste (Bourdieu, 1984). Taste is the conceptualization of cultural capital, of attitudes, behaviors, and preferences, and it is the way individuals judge and appraise experiences and ways of consumption (Bourdieu 1984, see also Lamont & Lareau, 1988). It secures a position in social hierarchy (Trigg, 2001).

Cultural capital can be understood as a "set of socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices" (Holt, 1998, p. 3). It is a power resource that provides access to high social positions, and indicates them (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). It is all the intellectual and socially respected knowledge amassed to a person (Trigg, 2001).

Bourdieu (1984) argues that status and respect is gained by consuming objects and using consumption practices that require accumulated cultural capital to be understood or appreciated. This is because consuming cultural capital objects implies that the consumer also has cultural capital, granted that other people notice and understand the delicateness of the way of consumption (Holt, 1998).

Bourdieu (1984) also states that cultural capital is continually expressed in consumer action, and status is continually gained and signalled, since all consumer behavior creates distinctions of taste (see also Holt, 1998). That means that all consumer behaviors and actions are in essence indications of cultural capital, and that status and class is signalled by showing taste with those actions (Bourdieu, 1984; see also Holt, 1998).

Lamont & Lareau (1988, p. 153) list different previous definitions and understandings of cultural capital. It can be defined as "knowledge of high culture," "symbolic mastery of social practices," "performing tasks in culturally acceptable way," "participation in high culture events," and "the stock of ideas and concepts acquired from previous encounters." Lamont & Lareau argue that Bourdieu's understanding of cultural capital is complex and incoherent, and propose a definition of cultural capital as "widely shared, high status cultural signals … used for social and cultural exclusion" (p. 156). They argue that cultural capital is used as a basis of exclusion to prevent people with low cultural capital from entering social groups with high status, or even getting esteemed occupations.

Cultural capital has three types (Bourdieu 1984; 1986; see also Lamont & Lareau, 1988, Holt, 1998). Most importantly, it can be embodied as an integral part of a person becoming their habitus; the way a person views, values, and classifies consumption objects, and shows taste. Knowledge and behavior that are valued in the society are embodied into the person's habitus as tastes and consumption practices (see also Holt, 1998). Cultural capital can be objectified in physical and material objects requiring embodied cultural capital to be consumed and understood, and it can be institutionalized in more or less formal proofs of cultural capital and class position, such as diplomas or degrees (Bourdieu, 1986).

Important factor of cultural capital, and other forms of capital, is that it is convertible to other forms of capital. This means that, for example, social capital can be converted into economic capital when a person is hired based on his friends and connections. The value of gained cultural capital is described by its ability to be converted to the other forms of capital in social interaction. (Bourdieu, 1984; see also Holt, 1998, Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2013).

Bourdieu (1984) is not specifically interested in how cultural capital is built (see Lamont & Lareau, 1988), but explains that it's gained by social upbringing, peer groups, and formal education (see also Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2013). Other researchers have argued that it is also built with personal investments of time and money in a particular consumption field with high cultural capital (Thornton, 1996, see Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2013). This is further investigated in the next chapter.

3. BUILDING IDENTITY AND STATUS IN FRAGMENTED CONSUMPTION WORLD

In this chapter the concepts of social identity theory, consumption subcultures, and field-dependent cultural capital are introduced. The chosen literature reflects the essential articles and research in the fields of social identity theory (e.g. Hogg, Terry, White, Stets, Burke), consumption subcultures (e.g. Arnould & Thompson, Muniz & O'Guinn, Schouten & McAlexander, Kates, Kozinets), and localized cultural capital (e.g. Thompson, Arsel, Holt).

It is demonstrated that modern consumers take part in various different groups and consumption subcultures at the same time. These subcultures are used to build a desired consumer identity. At the same time, the cultural capital gained from these consumption subcultures or consumption fields is used to secure broader social class and status.

These studies are relevant to the research questions and approach of this study. To understand the phenomenon of craft beer hobbyism and explore how the consumption subculture is used to build an identity and gain and signal social status it is required to examine the relevant literature introduced in this chapter. The literature also aids in the building of an interpretative framework for the study.

3.1 Social identity

Identity is formed, built, and re-assessed in a social world with multiple groups and points of reference for the individual. Theories of social identity look at how identity, or the self-concept, is formed socially in a fragmented world, and how an individual can have multiple identities based on the different groups he takes part in (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Two strains of research have formed around social identity: the identity theory and the social identity theory. The former has a role-based understanding of self and identity, while the later has a group-based understanding. (Hogg et al., 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Identity theory sees identity and self as constructing of a collection of different identities the individual has. These different identities are determined by the different roles the individual takes in different groups he belongs to. The meanings attached to these roles in the groups form the core of the self. There is also a hierarchy of different identities, as

some group role identities are more salient than others for the individual. (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Social identity theory is the theory of intergroup relations and behavior. Individual builds his self-concept on the social categories he feels he belongs to. The defining characteristics of the groups become also characteristics of his identity, and memberships in these groups shape his self-concept. According to social identity theory people categorize themselves and others into social groups to help make sense of their surroundings. People also compare social categories in a way that favors the categories they belong to in order to enhance their self-concept. (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

3.2 Subcultures of consumption

In modern marketplace and consumer world consumers take part in different consumption groups or communities, often in multiple groups at the same time (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Consumer culture theory research has made it apparent that consumers manage their identities and "forge feelings of social solidarity and create distinctive, fragmentary, self-selected, and sometimes transient cultural worlds through the pursuit of common consumption interests" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 873). These consumption worlds or communities can be inhabited by consumers (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) who wish to take part in these worlds and thus shape their identities in accordance with social identity theory.

The consumption communities or subcultures are formed around a distinct brand, product, product category, or form of consumption (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). They are characterized by shared and distinct practices, beliefs, parlance, and symbols, as can be observed with motorbiker subcultures such as the Harley & Davidson community (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). The consumption communities share narratives, rituals, traditions, values, and moral, like in the cases of subcultures formed around Ford, Saab, and Macintosh brands (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Subcultures can be based on a common history or experiences, like in the case of gay subculture (Kates, 2002), or even on escapism, like in the case of Star Trek fans (Kozinets, 2001). One defining feature of consumption subcultures is the formation of structured social relationships of members and distinct hierarchy of social classes within the group (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Kates, 2002).

3.3 Field-dependent cultural capital

While Bourdieu (1984, see Holt, 1998; Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2013) was interested in studying the general cultural capital that consumers have gained in their upbringing, he also gave thought to the different 'sectors of life', or communities, that he saw as 'fields' that are multiple, distinct, somewhat independent, and homologous in behavior. Consumers gain, signal, and compete for social position and status within these communities with cultural capital specific to that community in social 'status games'.

Status within the consumption subcultures is gained by showing cultural capital distinct to that subculture. This includes having knowledge, skills, and behavior important to that subculture, knowledge of different symbols particular to the culture, and skills in using the symbols in inventive ways (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

This cultural capital tied to the consumption subculture can be called 'field-dependent cultural capital' (Arsel & Thompson, 2011). This localized version of cultural capital was first studied by Thornton (1996, see Holt, 1998 and Kates, 2002) in the subculture of young rave-goers and the status games at play in this social setting. She learned that in the case of rave subculture the cultural capital consists of knowledge of latest music, dance styles, and rave fashion.

Consumer researchers studying subcultural capital (Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2012) argue that consumers have both boarder general cultural capital and specialized field-dependent cultural capital. General cultural capital fits better the model suggested by Bourdieu, while the field-dependent cultural capital explains consumer behavior within consumption subcultures. General cultural capital signals status in the broad consumer hierarchy, while field-dependent cultural capital shows position in the social classes of a subculture.

Field-dependent cultural capital is built within the consumption subculture with the behavior distinct to that community (Thornton, 1996, see Arsel & Thompson, 2011, Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2012), but it's not independent of the broader consumer world surrounding the subculture (Arsel & Thompson, 2011). Consumption subcultures are interlocked with the broader consumer world and invaded with the same meanings, behaviors, and power relations as all subcultures in the marketplace (Holt, 1997). Marketers, media, fashion, and other cultural producers attach the consumption

subculture to the mainstream no matter how niche a consumption subculture is (Arsel & Thompson, 2011).

Consumers draw localized cultural capital from the consumption fields and thus gain broader cultural capital. This is done by incorporating the correct behaviors of the consumption subculture into attitudes and tastes of individual's habitus (Bourdieu, 1990, see Arsel & Bean, 2013; Holt, 1998).

The broad cultural capital is gained and distinction is made when consumer's class peers see, notice or otherwise know of the field-dependent cultural capital and the consumption behavior the individual has (Holt, 1998; see also Arsel & Thompson, 2011). Üstüner & Thompson (2012) studied how broad or general cultural capital can be gained by certain consumption behavior at a hairdresser, while Arsel & Bean (2013) showed how taste regimes, or the range of practices allowed within a certain consumption field, guide the way individuals can gather broad cultural capital from consumption subcultures.

Different subcultures of consumption have different status and position in the social hierarchy, for example yachting is seen as more prestigious than bowling, and thus the subcultural capital gained within the lower class subcultures is not as valued as the subcultural capital gained in higher class communities. This means that consumers from the lower class subcultures need special consumption practices to try to increase the value of their localized cultural capital. (Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2012).

Despite initial theoretical inquiries, the systems of transferring field-dependent cultural capital to broad cultural capital still needs more research, that would deepen the understanding of forms of capital, reproduction of cultural capital, and consumer behavior (Arsel & Thompson, 2011).

4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

To answer the research question of craft beer consumers' identity building an empirical research is done. In this chapter the research context of Finnish craft beer scene is introduced, the research paradigm of the study and the methodological underpinnings are explained, and the method and research process are presented.

4.1 Context

The context of this study is the intriguing modern market phenomenon of the booming consumption subculture of craft beer hobbyism, enthusiasm, or connoisseurism. Craft beer simply means beer that is made by a craft brewery. The definition of a craft brewery varies between countries; in the US a craft brewery has to produce less than 715,4 million liters of beer annually and has to be independently owned (The Brewers Association, 2016a), while the limit for craft brewery in Finland is the annual production of maximum of 15 million liters of beer (Finnish Law on Alcohol Tax 1994/1471 §9). Some countries, including Finland, give tax redemptions for craft breweries. Very small craft breweries are sometimes referred to as microbreweries (see Brewers of Europe, 2015).

For the purposes of this study craft beer hobbyists are defined as people who consider themselves craft beer hobbyists, regularly drink craft beer, and if given the choice between purchasing craft beer or regular beer made by big breweries, would first purchase a craft beer. Craft beer hobbyists also tend to visit craft beer events and bars, and have tasted many different craft beers from different breweries.

For this study it is also necessary to make a distinction between craft beers, which are made by craft breweries and tend to be more difficult in taste and experimental in style, and bulk beers, that are brewed by major breweries and aim for mainstream consumption with their lager style and simple and easy taste (see Choi & Stack, 2005). For this study, bulk beer means beer that is generally cheaper than craft beer and is sold in huge volumes. They include large Finnish brands such as Koff, Karjala, Karhu, Olvi, Lapin Kulta, and new store-brand beers such as Pirkka or Rainbow. The distinction between craft beer enthusiasts and non-hobbyists who prefer to buy cheaper bulk beer is also reflected in public discussion and in media (see e.g. Käkelä, 2016; Mälkiä, 2016).

Craft beer hobbyism is not a strictly defined subculture, and includes different products, brands, practices, behaviors, places, and times for different drinkers. Generally, the practices of the subculture can be thought to include drinking craft beers, tasting different beers from different breweries, analyzing and comparing beers and beer experiences, visiting beer bars, pubs, and breweries, and attending beer events, festivals, and tastings. Craft beer hobbyists like to read and learn about beer styles, tastes, breweries and beer history, and are often quite knowledgeable in beer types, tastes, and nuances. It is increasingly common to drink craft beer with a meal and pair beers to the tastes of different meal courses. Craft beer hobbyism also includes a social aspect, as beers are usually analyzed and compared together with friends and other craft beer enthusiasts.

Craft beer drinking is growing fast globally. While the overall global beer market and production has declined (Terazono, 2016), craft beer production is growing. In the US craft beer output grew 12% in 2015, and its market share has increased in five years from 5,7% in 2011 to 12,2% in 2015. Craft beer has 21% of the US beer retail market value in 2015 (The Brewers Association, 2016b). In EU, the total consumption of beer has declined 2,6% from 2009 to 2014, yet the number of breweries has grown 88% in the same time (Brewers of Europe, 2015).

In Finland, the number of craft breweries has doubled since 2008, and every month a new Finnish craft brewery is founded (Iltalehti, 2016). In July 2016 there were over 70 Finnish craft breweries with a market share of 4% of the Finnish beer market (Koskinen & Liimatainen, 2016). The growth is so fast in Finland that there are concerns if all the new breweries will survive with the high costs associated with craft brewing (see Sandell, 2016; Koskinen & Liimatainen, 2016). Overall Finnish craft breweries still have quite poor profitability (Koskinen, 2016).

The interest towards craft beer and craft beer hobbyism has skyrocketed in the recent years around the world, and global media talks about a craft beer boom (see e.g. Terazono, 2016; Passy, 2015; Randazzo, 2016; Niemi, 2016). Craft beer has become a trend especially in the US, where new bars are continuously opened, beer events and festivals are being organized (Passy, 2015). The US breweries are catering to the newfound market so fast that they are running out of key ingredient hops (Hunter & Terazono, 2016), and out of new names for beers (Randazzo, 2016). Similar craft beer enthusiasm is described around the world (see Gómez-Corona et al., 2016; Mejlholm & Martens, 2006).

In Finland, the craft beer craze has been in public discussion for the past few years (see e.g. Kenttämaa, 2016; Sandell, 2016; Niemi, 2016; Mälkiä, 2016; Koskinen & Liimatainen, 2016; Drake, 2016), and the The Finnish Federation of the Brewing and Soft Drinks Industry has been talking about a Finnish craft beer boom (Niemi, 2016). This development is remarkable, as the first craft breweries started to operate in Finland only in 1995 when the country joined the EU and the restrictions on founding small breweries were lessened (Drake, 2016).

Currently Finnish media is talking about how the younger generation now drinks craft beers (Kenttämaa, 2016), how the beer industry is in disruption (Sandell, 2016), how the beer consumer preferences are changing (Mälkilä, 2016), and how there are so many new Finnish breweries and beers that one cannot keep up (Koskinen & Liimatainen, 2016). New beer events, beer bars, and beer shops are opened in Finland (see Sarhimaa, 2016), and there is even a Finnish craft beer smartphone app that competes with its American counterparts (Pallaste, 2016). The consumer interest towards craft beers together with the lobbying of the Finnish brewery and craft brewery industries can be held at least partly responsible for the brewery-friendly change in the Finnish alcohol law taking effect in 2017 (see The Finnish Federation of the Brewing and Soft Drinks Industry, 2016; The Finnish Microbreweries' Association, 2016; Korkki, 2016; Helaniemi, 2016).

While there are multiple studies and even academic journals dedicated to the research on wine and wine consumption (see e.g. Aqueveque, 2015; Atkin & Thach, 2012; Keown & Casey, 1995; Lockshin & Corsi, 2012), prior research on craft beer consumers is limited. Some initial studies, reports, and dissertations exist on the craft beer marketplace (Ascher, 2012; Murray & O'Neill, 2012), beer style preferences (Aquilani et al., 2015), categorisation (Wright, 2014), and attitudes and motivations (Gómez-Corona et al., 2016). Initial research findings attribute the craft beer boom to the growing interest in homebrewing (Murray & O'Neill, 2012), changes in consumers' taste for beer (Aquilani, 2015), and the aim to build an authentic and original consumer identity (Goméz-Corona et al., 2015). Anecdotal reasoning discussed in the Finnish media includes changes in taste preferences (Mälkiä, 2016) and consumption preferences of the younger generations (Kenttämaa, 2016). In Finnish academia some recent research has been done on the importance of beer alcohol percentage for customers (Luukkonen, 2013) and even on the rehydrating and replenishing effect of beer (Leikas, 2014), but there is no prior academic research on Finnish craft beer hobbyists.

4.2 Paradigm and methodology

For this study a qualitative research approach is chosen in order to gain deep understanding of a socially constructed consumer culture. Defining qualitative research has proven difficult, and often qualitative research is defined by comparison to quantitative research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 4). Qualitative research can be defined by looking at its research interests of language, discovery of recurrent patterns, and understanding of meanings (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 4).

Qualitative research gives access and understanding to consumer behavior in its context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 3), which is very suitable for the study of craft beer hobby and hobbyists in their everyday world. Since craft beer hobby is a socially constructed phenomenon, qualitative research is a great method to gain critical and reflexive understanding of it (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 3).

Prior academic research of Finnish craft beer hobby is limited, and understanding of the consumer culture is somewhat lacking. Qualitative research is based on understanding and researcher interpretation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 5), and thus suits this exploratory study well. Like Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005; see Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p 5) have put it: “qualitative research is particularly relevant when prior insights about a phenomenon under scrutiny are modest,” like in the case of this study.

Since this study aims to understand how craft beer hobbyists built their identity using the consumption subculture, discourse analysis from the social psychological research area is chosen as the method of study. Discourse analysis, and thus this study, is built on the paradigm of social constructionism, the “premise that the individual self is not an isolated, autonomous entity but, rather, is in constant, dynamic interaction with the social world” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 102). Social constructionism is an overarching term or paradigm for different social theories, methods, and approaches, one of which is discourse analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 4).

Paradigm can be thought as a set of basic beliefs or understandings of the world. It is built on ontology, the understanding of the nature of reality, on epistemology, the relationship between reality and the observer, and on methodology, the way how inquiries about the reality can be done. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Building on the qualitative research stream, this study is interpretive in nature. Interpretivism is often seen as interchangeable with qualitative research, and it means that the actions and behavior of research subjects are examined and interpreted in the social setting and context they happen in. The findings are often thought to be only relevant in the context of the research, they do not answer any hypotheses, and they cannot be generalised, although researchers might talk about transferability or external validity of the findings (Williams, 2000). In interpretivism understanding and interpretation of the human actions are needed, and researcher's interpretation of the data plays an important role (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Choosing a positivistic approach, such as hypothetico-reductive quantitative research (see Williams, 2000), could lead to ontological and methodological issues in this study.

Social constructionist ontology sees that world is built on interaction, relationships, and social categorization (Gergen, 1985; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 102). This means that meaning and knowledge and our understanding of the world is not fixed, rather it is dependent on the social setting, and it is constantly negotiated in the social world (Gergen, 1985; see also Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Reality is constructed in social interaction by people, and is thus outcome of social action (Gergen 1985; see also Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008).

The understanding of the world is based on the subjective categorisation of things, and meanings and knowledge are never objective truths or representations of world 'out there.' This is not to say that nothing really exists, the real world is out there but it only gets its meaning and form in social interaction (Gergen 1985; Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 9). Meanings are made in systems of representation, in discourses, where words, pictures, and other symbols get their interpretations (Gergen, 1985). Discourses should be the focus of analysis, since reality cannot be accessed without of them (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

Social constructionism tries to bridge the gap between objective features of the society, such as organizations and technologies, and subjective meanings made by individuals in social processes such as discourses (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 20). Vivien Burr (1995, see Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, p. 20) identified four premises of social constructionism: the world is presented and mediated subjectively through language, discourses are created socially and are bound to a time and place, knowledge is built on practices of talk, and knowledge is tied to social interaction.

Social constructionism has faced critique on its view of knowledge being subjective and based on language. Critics argue that if knowledge is constantly changing and malleable, it means that there is no consistency in society. However, this is only an exaggeration, and doesn't reflect the true idea of social constructionism. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 5).

Since social constructionism and discourse analysis heavily involves the researcher in the collection and analysis of data, this study has its epistemological roots in subjectivism. This means that the researcher and the data are closely linked, and findings can be thought to be created at the same time as the data is collected. The traditional distinction between ontology and epistemology fades, since the understanding of what can be known (ontology) gets mixed with the understanding of the relationship between reality and the researcher (epistemology). (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Discourse analysis and, hence, this study, is interested in the social systems of meaning making. This methodology is called structuralism, and this study also encompasses its more recent development post-structuralism. Structuralism and post-structuralism can both be understood to be parts or sublevels of social constructionism (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 7).

Structuralism and post-structuralism both state that the connection to and understanding of reality is through language and its symbols (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 8-9; Moisander & Valtonen 2006). Structuralism, first framed by Saussure (1960, see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 10; Moisander & Valtonen 2006), argues that symbols in language, such as words or phrases, don't have an objective meaning, but gain it from social interaction. Social conventions allow people to figure the meanings others try to convey when they use certain words, images, or metaphors.

Structuralism sees the symbols to be structured in relation to each other, and gain their meaning from their fixed place in the structure of the language (Saussure, 1960, see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 10). Post-structuralism agrees on the structured view of language, but objects the idea that the symbols and objects of meaning are fixed. Post-structuralism sees that the symbols and signs are always tied to their context, the time and people using them, and that they can change (Laclau, 1993, see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 10).

Structuralism and post-structuralism are interested in the structures of meaning making, since they show the systems that people use to understand their world (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Social world can be seen and studied as a network of meaning making processes (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 8-9). The access to social world is through language, and it is the social practice that not only reflects but also constructs the understanding of reality (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 8-9). Language makes the reality, so it should be the site of analysis (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

4.3 Method

In order to study the way craft beer enthusiasts use their hobby and consumption subculture to build their identities, it is needed to access and analyze the identity work of the beer hobbyists. As social constructionism and structuralism state, the access to the social reality is through language, and hence discourse analysis from the social psychological research area is chosen as the method of this study.

Put forward by Jonathan Potter and Margareth Wetherell (1990, see Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 107), this form of discourse analysis looks at how versions of self are constructed, and how individuals see themselves within society and groups (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). It examines how discourses available to the speaker are used to shape and negotiate recollections of the world, selves, and identities, and how all this affects social relationships (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 7). Importantly, social psychological discourse analysis is not concerned of cognition or internal psychology, but rather builds on social psychology and the analysis of the social world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 7).

Key concept in this study is discourse, and it can be defined as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1). Discourse means all forms of talk and text, including the meanings and narratives conveyed (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 107). The premise here is that discourses do not simply represent our identities or relationships, but actively shape and influence them (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1).

In social psychological discourse analysis individuals are thought to build their identities by positioning themselves in the society using everyday discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1-2). These everyday discourse practices that individuals use to construct their identities and draw from in discussions are called interpretative repertoires, coined by

Potter & Wetherell (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 111). These repertoires are in the focus of social psychological discourse analysis.

Self is put together from multiple different identities that are negotiated through self-positioning in discourse. This positioning is done by using and referring to different interpretative discourses in talk. (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 111).

Interpretative repertoires are "coherent and systematic ways of talking about things" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 232-233), and they can be built on different linguistic traits. Interpretative repertoires use "discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images" (Wetherell and Potter, 1990, see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 107). Many different repertoires are can be used simultaneously (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 233), they are constantly changed and reshaped when used in discourses, but at the same time they have distinct features that can be identified (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Interpretative repertoires are the 'anchors' that show how language resources are used to accomplish different identity related tasks (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 233).

According to Wetherell & Potter (1988, see Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 233) there is no single correct tool or process to do social psychological discourse analysis, since the form of analysis needs interpretative understanding of the research context. However, interviewing is often used to analyze the different interpretive repertoires (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 233).

Interviewing works well for the study, for it is in fact "a vehicle for producing cultural talk, which can be analyzed to gain cultural knowledge" (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 71) instead of simply collecting data. The social world and identity work of craft beer drinkers can be understood through interviews, because the interviewees are understood to be employing their cultural and discursive resources in the interview to reproduce their social reality (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 71).

4.4 Research process

For this study eight craft beer enthusiasts were individually interviewed in semi-structured manner. The limited number of interviewees can be seen as a weakness of this study, and something that must be taken into consideration when assessing the impact of the findings. However, data saturation (see Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006) was reached

after eight interviews and elements for the findings were possible to be analyzed from the data.

The interviewees (see chart 1) were all residents of Helsinki, the capital of Finland, were all between the age of 25 and 28, and were all highly educated, with all but one having at least bachelor's degree in science. A balance in gender distribution was aimed for.

Another limitation of this study is the similarity of the interviewees' demographics, and the slight overrepresentation of males, and this must be considered when evaluating the quality of the study. However, since this study aims to shed light to the social world of craft beer drinkers, the interviewees were chosen to represent well the demographic features of craft beer hobbyists. Initial studies show that craft beer hobbyists tend to be younger people with high education (Gómez-Corona et al., 2016; Murray & O'Neill, 2012), and the target group of this study fits that finding. Since this study investigates the beer consumers or drinkers, craft brewers and beer industry employees were left out.

Chart 1: Craft beer hobbyists interviewed

Interviewee	**Gender**	**Age**	**Education level**	**Residence**
M1	M	26	BSc	Helsinki
M2	M	26	BSc	Helsinki
M3	M	26	MSc	Helsinki
M4	M	31	BSc	Helsinki
M5	M	28	Student	Helsinki
F1	F	27	BSc	Helsinki
F2	F	27	MSc	Helsinki
F3	F	25	BSc	Helsinki

All the interviewees identified themselves as craft beer enthusiasts or hobbyists, and regularly consumed craft beer. There was no single determinant of hobbyism chosen, such as amount or frequency of craft beer consumption, but rather the overall positive

attitude towards craft beer consumption was the decisive factor. All of the interviewees, if given the choice between purchasing a craft beer or a bulk lager beer, would first purchase a craft beer. Also, all the interviewees had been at least once to a craft beer event in Finland or abroad, and had tasted at least twenty different craft beers. Other than that no strict requirements were set, and it could be argued that the interviewees of the study are quite casual craft beer hobbyists who also have other interests and hobbies.

The interviews were conducted in a calm yet relaxed environment: at homes, in beer bars, or in cafes or restaurants. The interviews were of semi-structured nature, meaning that an open conversation supporting the free surfacing of identity talk was achieved and maintained, with supporting questions used to keep the conversation relevant to the study. The somewhat limited length and scope of the interviews can be seen as a weakness of the study, although enough data was collected to make the interpretation and analysis possible.

The topic of the interview or conversation was the craft beer hobby and the important features of it. The interviewees were asked to describe and talk about what is important and essential in the hobby, what are the defining characteristics of craft beer hobby and hobbyists, and without what the hobby would not be what it is. Since the interviewees were talking about their hobby, the social world of it, and their relationship to the hobby, the selected topic allowed discreet access to their identity talk.

Notes were taken during the interviews, and afterwards the interview talk was transcribed in verbatim. This led to textual data of the talk of the interviewees for analysis. The data was then coded into different themes of interpretative repertoires emerging from the interview data (see Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 124). This meant looking for distinctive patterns of talk, different themes and word selections, and most importantly different subject positions the craft beer hobbyists took.

As this type of research method requires, a close engagement with the data was kept, with multiple iterative rounds of reading, analysis, and interpretation (see Kovalainen & Eriksson, 2008, p. 233). After finding and coding themes from the data, the interviews was read again with the increased understanding of the themes emerged so far. This helped find new themes and strengthen the understanding of the ones already found.

4.5 Evaluation of the study

Among researchers there is debate on what is good qualitative research, and how to evaluate it. As qualitative data analysis cannot produce one single, final, and definite finding or interpretation, it is difficult to choose evaluation criteria that would conclusively measure the quality of the findings or interpretations (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 147).

Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, p. 294) note the possibility of using modified versions of classic quantitative research evaluation criteria of validity, reliability, and generalization in qualitative research, but come to the conclusion that especially for subjectivist and constructionist studies the criteria's understandings of reality and creation of knowledge are badly suited. That is why it is suggested to use the following evaluation criteria that are more appropriate for this kind of study.

Dependability means that the research process is logical and traceable (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). To display the logic behind the research process the research method, plan, practices, and subjects are introduced and documented in the study. The possible weaknesses in the research are also demonstrated and the made choices are explained.

Transferability means that the study and its results are connected to other research in the field of study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). This criterion is not about replication or generalization as such (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). It is attempted to tie the study to previous research and theories in the field of consumer culture theory, consumer identity, and cultural capital, and in the limited amount of previous research on beer consumers. Consumer phenomena similar to the one studied here could be found in other high end consumables like coffee or whiskey, and it is likely that the findings would have similarities with the findings here.

Credibility means that the study uses good and relevant data and there is logic behind the interpretations made (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). Even though only eight people were interviewed for the study, the collected data is insightful and high quality enough for the purposes of the study. The interviewees are a good sample of the target population of young craft beer hobbyists, and during the discussions a good understanding of their culture was created. Since the topic and culture studied in this

research were familiar to the researcher beforehand, a deeper understanding made interpretations from the data easier.

Conformability means that the links between interpretations and data are clearly discernible (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). Easy understanding of the connections between data and findings is aimed for, and quotes and excerpts from the interview data are used throughout the analysis to show the connection.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter the data collected in the interviews is analyzed and the findings are presented and interpreted.

As stated in the research question, the goal of the study is to access the identity talk of craft beer hobbyists to understand the ways how their identity work is done. The chosen method of analysis is social psychological discourse analysis that looks for interpretative repertoires of talk that make the interviewees identity subject positions visible.

Discourse analysis and the finding of interpretative repertoires of talk always involves close researcher engagement with the data, and deeper understanding and interpretation of the data (see Kovalainen & Eriksson, 2008, p. 233). Like Moisander & Valtonen (2006) have put it, “interpretation always involves improvisational, imaginative and creative aspects, and therefore bears many similarities with the production of art” (p. 104). Even if the researcher has preunderstanding or existing ties to the research phenomenon, like in the case of this study, it is not seen as a problem, but rather a valid starting point for interpretation and analysis (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, p. 109).

5.1 Interpretative repertoires of craft beer drinkers

While analyzing the identity talk of craft beer hobbyists when they are talking about their beer experiences and the hobby in general four different interpretative repertoires and subject positions emerged. These interpretative repertoires shed light on the identity talk of a craft beer hobbyist and it is used to build their consumer identity. The interviewees talk about the hobby in general, the valued practices, rituals, and unwritten rules of the hobby, and most importantly what kind of people hobbyists are.

This identity talk and the interpretative repertoires discreetly give a view into the identity building of craft beer hobbyists. The hobbyists use different subject positions when talking about the hobby, and thus reveal what kind of identity they seek and with what kind of discourses it is built. Interestingly the interviewees often started to talk about craft beer hobbyists in third person even when they were referring to themselves. This might have showed that it was easier for the interviewees to talk identity talk when they were seemingly analyzing someone else than themselves.

Since the repertoires reflect how the craft beer hobbyists see themselves, they share a generally positive perspective. The repertoires share traits and features and have some noticeable overlap, but are also quite distinct. In their identity talk the interviewees described and made claims on who they are, what kind of hobbyist and person they are, and who they are not. They used both identity avowals and identity attributions (see S. Hunt & Miller, 1997) when describing their hobby, their behavior, and their preferences.

Together the four interpretative repertoires give a comprehensive picture of an identity of well knowledged, analytic yet hedonistic person, who has taste and whom others look up to.

5.1.1 Craft beer hobbyists as experimenters and explorers

The first and most prominent interpretive repertoire that emerged from the data concerns the experimentative and explorative nature of craft beer hobbyists. Craft beer hobbyists see themselves as people who are always looking for a new taste, for a new experience, and striving to find the hidden gem in the massive sea of craft beers and breweries, despite the costs in time, effort, and money. Thus they are building an identity of exciting experimenters and explorers, who find the cool things before others.

The interviewees use language that shows that an important part of their craft beer hobby is trying new beers, finding new good beers, and experimenting with new beers and breweries. Hobbyists are always aiming to taste a new beer or new beer style, and to experience a new beer bar, brewery, or beer event. All of the interviewees talked about the importance of willingness to try new beers and tastes, and used phrases like *"Willingness to try and taste new beers is definitely a driving force behind craft beer hobbyism"* (Female, 27). This tasting can be done in a beer bar, at a craft beer event, or just by purchasing new beers from the store and drinking them at home. *"When I buy beer from a store, I'm the kind [of drinker] that buys one wild card [unknown random beer] just to try something new"* (Male, 26). It is also important that the drinkers primarily try to avoid beers they have already tasted. *"It would be difficult to be a craft beer hobbyist if [the place I consume beer at] has only three different beers, there has to be a good selection"* (Male, 28).

Craft beer hobbyists want to taste new beers just to get new experiences, and it does not matter if the beer is not a personal favorite of the drinker. This became clear in expressions like: *"[If I don't like a particular beer] the problem is not with the beer, it's with*

me" (Male, 26). Even if the tasted beer is not to the hobbyists liking, the purchase has not gone in vain: *"Craft beer hobbyism is not about tasting beers I already know are good"* (Male, 26) and *"Even if I end up buying some horrible grapefruit beer I can laugh it off, at least I learned something new"* (Female, 27).

Craft beer hobbyists are ready to spend time and money and go the extra mile to find and taste new beers and have new beer experiences. This includes visiting special stores, bars, and events, travelling a bit more to purchase certain beers, and making detours when travelling.

These investments are not thought as anything special, but rather as a part of the hobby and the identity of the hobbyist: *"I'm ready to make an effort to try new beers, it's not a big deal. For example, I might walk a little more to go to a certain store that I know has a beer I haven't tasted, instead of the closest store"* (Male, 26), and *"Of course I will visit a specific bar that I know has a better selection in beers, it means so much for the evening"* (Male, 28). Hobbyists nonchalantly talked about purchases that non-hobbyists might think as over the top: *"A friend of mine just ordered a whole box of different craft beers from Germany for couple of hundred euros, it's so cool, he has now new beers for months"* (Female, 27).

Craft beer events and festivals with relatively expensive tickets also offer an opportunity to have new experiences, and most of the interviewees mentioned *"for sure visiting beer events, they have new cool beers … and it's much cooler to tell others that you've been to a beer festival rather than a rock festival everybody goes to"* (Female, 27). Also, taking time to visit special craft beer places, mainly craft breweries, was mentioned as an *"important thing for craft beer nuts, it's something special to taste beers at the place they were made in"* (Female, 27). When travelling, hobbyists are willing to make special travel arrangements to find new experiences: *"When I'm travelling I always aim to visit a local beer house and taste something that I couldn't find in Finland. ... If I've heard from my friends about a special beer bar that's worth a visit, I'll make a detour"* (Male, 31).

This quest for beer experiences may become a numbers game for the hobbyists. The interviewees talked about thinking about the total number of different beers they have tasted, and focusing on always finding new beers just to increase the number. All new tasted beers and the total number of them are often marked on social media beer apps like *Untapped* that shows the data to the hobbyists' friends. The social media apps also functioned as a logbook of tasted beers that the hobbyists sometimes went back to just to

reminiscence on the tastes. *"[On Untapped] you keep a list of beers you've had, I might relive the beers I've had, and you can show others all the beers you've tasted"* (Male, 26).

The beer exploring was not limited to just tasting beers, but the hobbyists talked about learning about beers by reading beer books, websites, and blogs, and talking with and learning from beer professionals such as bartenders, brewers, and beer sommeliers. *"You can tell a beer hobbyist apart from a person who just drinks beer for the fact that hobbyists also educate themselves by reading [books and websites]"* (Male, 26) This 'dry running' was talked about as a secondary way to gain beer experience, but it came up in the talks of many of the interviewees: *"In addition to tasting beers … I also educate myself on beer websites and blogs"* (Male, 31).

Hobbyists also talked about how they experiment with beers outside of the bar, in the kitchen. Many of the interviewees talked about how they experiment with beers and food, pairing dishes and beers, and even using beer in cooking. *"I often want to experiment and try to nicely pair foods with beers. There you get to use your previous knowledge and also try something new*" (Male, 26).

To justify the extra time and effort used and to explain why they are always after a new beer experience, the hobbyists used three different discourses. These underlying drivers for hobbyists behavior are an interesting component of the experimenter-explorer subject position and identity.

First and foremost, craft beer hobbyists talk about enjoying new tastes for the sake of the experience (1). *"One of the best parts of beer drinking is getting to select the beers at a store that has a wide selection. It's like being in a candy store, it's shopping, you can spend any amount of time when you're looking for new beers to taste"* (Female, 27). Hobbyists see themselves as people who like to learn new things: *"Finding out new things and being an expert appeal to me, it's nice to gather information"* (Male, 28). The hobbyists talk about enjoying choosing new beers in bars, stores, or at a beer event, guessing how the new beer will taste, and excitement of new beer experiences. *"I mean, there's the thrill you get when you get to taste something very special or unexpected, like a mango chili beer, or some weird göse beer"* (Male, 28).

The second driver that can be found in the discussions is more in line with the identity of explorer or adventurer (2). "*"[Craft beer hobbyism for me is about] finding the ultimate beer, the best beer ever. I'm like an explorer going through different beers."* (Male, 26)

Craft beer hobbyists are continuously on the look for the best beer they can find, and they talk about the search like it is about finding a hidden gem in the sea of beers. Like one hobbyist puts it: *"I can go the extra mile and try new beers to find the best beer. Experimenting [with different beers] gives me the chance to always find something better"* (Male, 31). The reward for the hobbyist for this exploring is finding a new great beer, but the exploring will not end there. *"When I find a gem, a beer that is bafflingly good, it's a great feeling, but even then I'll just keep looking for new [even better] beers"* (Male, 26).

The third driver for the explorer behavior is the urge to gain experience in the beer world and to learn about new beers, breweries, beer styles, production methods, ingredients, and beer countries (3). This willingness to continuously learn more about beers was talked about by many of the interviewees. *"[For me] beer hobbyism is about knowing different beer styles … and understanding the roles of different ingredients, and really the only way to learn about them is to taste different beers"* (Male, 26). Tasting and trying new beers, as well as reading about beers was described as a key to getting into the hobby and building the important knowledge and experience base. According to the interviewees without previous experience with different tastes it would be difficult to join conversations, analyze and evaluate beers, and truly enjoy them.

5.1.2 Craft beer hobbyists as analysts and critics

The second most important interpretative repertoire used and subject position taken by the craft beer hobbyists was the position of an analyst and a critic. The hobbyists identify with a knowledgeable analyst who can identify and pinpoint beer styles, tastes, ingredients, and even production methods, as well as with an acquainted critic who can compare and evaluate different beers, styles, and breweries. They also clearly differentiate themselves from people who drink beer without analyzing it.

All of the hobbyists talked about analyzing and evaluating craft beers when drinking them, and comparing them to previous beer experiences. The interviewees talked about being the kind of person who usually analyzes and evaluates tastes, which resonates with the sought identity of a knowledgeable analyst: *"I guess I'm the kind of guy who always deconstructs the taste [of beer], who analyzes the taste"* (Male, 26) and *"[We] hobbyists always categorize beers, either according to our own preferences, or then … 'this is a classic ale' or 'what an airy lager' or 'this tastes like mämmi,' according to different styles and adjectives [attached to beers]"* (Male, 28).

In addition to the analysis, hobbyists also talked about judging and rating beers, and talked about being able to make a distinction between good, mediocre, and poor beer. This rating was based on the deconstruction and analysis of the taste and style of the beer and comparison to previous beer experiences. This role of beer critic was an important one for the hobbyists who talked about always evaluating and judging new beers when tasting them for the first time, visiting and hosting beer tastings that included comparing and ranking different beers, and having sometimes heated conversations on beer quality.

The hobbyists talked about analyzing and judging beers based on multiple different attributes including beer style, production method, color, opacity, type of malt, type of hops, type of yeast, acidity, bitterness, alcohol percentage, and any additional ingredients like fruits or spices. The discussions about beer characteristics could have gone on for hours, as the hobbyists were very keen to ponder the effect of different ingredients on the taste and quality of the beer. *"Important part of tasting craft beers is identifying the style and ingredients of the beer, what makes this beer so good"* (Male, 31). Despite the multitude of attributes and the vast knowledge that would be required to truly find the differences in tastes of yeasts, the hobbyists were confident in their ability to analyze the beers: *"I choose a beer based on its characteristics, on its style, color, and grain used, I can clearly notice the differences"* (Male, 26).

The interviewees emphasized the social aspect of the hobby, and talked about how they almost always taste, analyze, and discuss craft beers with other hobbyists and friends. *"Tasting beers is most fun with friends and other beer hobbyists. You get to comment the beers together"* (Female, 27). Each hobbyists of the group usually drinks different beers than the others, and they want to compare their beers in taste and other characteristics, and evaluate the beers in terms of quality. *"Usually everybody tells what kind of beer they're drinking ... then we discuss the beers, what we think of them, and what tastes we can find"* (Female, 27).

Hobbyists described how for them beer and beer analysis can be the exciting theme of the evening, a topic of conversation that starts from the beginning every time someone opens or orders a new beer. Sometimes the hobbyists gather together solely to taste, analyze, and evaluate new beers. *"It's easy to socialize around beers, and if you know someplace that has some certain beer on tap, you can ask your friends to go try it together"* (Male, 31).

One interesting practice among the hobbyists was cross tasting beers from other hobbyists' glasses. This almost invasive practice was positively mentioned by almost all of the interviewees, and was talked as an important and favorable practice among the hobbyists: *"We tend to taste beers from each other, even if they are personal [glasses of beer] that are not meant for everybody. [We] hobbyists are like that, we like to compare and evaluate beers together, that would never happen with bulk lager beer"* (Male, 28).

Even in the rare case that the hobbyists would be drinking craft beers alone or in a company that does not engage in the analysis and comparison of beers, the hobbyists evaluate beers silently to themselves. *"Even when I'm tasting beer alone I analyze and examine it, I get much more out of the beer that way"* (Female, 27).

The hobbyists made a clear distinction between themselves and people who just drink beer for beer without analyzing and evaluating it. They described themselves as analysts and drinkers who value the drink and know how to get the most out of it. For them, beer is more than a drink, it is a theme of the evening and a topic of conversation. According to the hobbyists, this is not the case for the non-hobbyists: *"The non-hobbyists drink beer just to drink beer. For them beer is not a central part of the evening, they drink beer while playing PlayStation or just out of thirst"* (Male, 26). Hobbyists also pointed out the non-hobbyists' lack of beer knowledge and effort in comparison to themselves: *"For non-hobbyists beer is a noun, there is a drink called beer. For [us] hobbyists there are different styles of beers"* (Male, 31).

5.1.3 Craft beer hobbyists as hedonists and connoisseurs

Identifying as a hedonist and a connoisseur in a subculture that involves foods, beverages, or other consumables like beer sounds probable, and this is just the case with the interviewed craft beer hobbyists. The interviewees talk about themselves as hedonists who engage in drinking and tasting beer for the psychological and physical enjoyment they get, as well as connoisseurs who know good quality beer, the correct practices and behaviors to drink it, and strive for them. This interpretative repertoire also includes clear juxtaposition and comparison of beer hobbyists and non-hobbyists, and forms of identity talk that make the distinction clear. This identification slightly overlaps with the explorer identity and the analyst identity discussed previously.

The craft beer hobbyists build an identity of a hedonist who is not ashamed to enjoy themselves. The interviewees talked about being a person who drinks and tastes craft

beers for the physical enjoyment, including the good taste, refreshment from a cold sparkling drink, and slight intoxication from the alcoholic beverage. *"I'm the kind who really values great taste. … The best things in craft beer hobbyism are the taste experiences, they're the reason I drink craft beers. I get to enjoy the tastes and other things [about the beer], and get a little intoxicate, which is quite nice sometimes,"* (Male, 28) and *"We hobbyists look for new experiences, for enjoyment. [For us] food is not just fuel, drinks are not just for thirst"* (Male, 31). The interviewees talked about more generally valuing enjoyment, fun, and pleasure in life, and having beer as a concrete example of the lifestyle. *"Big part of the craft beer hobbyism is to just have fun, it's fun to have beers together, and craft beers are associated with extrovert people, partying, and going out"* (Female, 27).

Beer hobbyists also identify as a connoisseur who knows good quality, can tell good beer from bad beer and a good brewery from a bad brewery, and strives to always consume good quality products and consumables. *"Craft beer hobbyist is an epitome of a connoisseur, they know what is good and only want to drink that"* (Female, 27).

The interviewees talked about wanting to get the most out of the beer, and knowing how to do it. The hobbyists talk about the correct ways to drink beer, for example knowing to let the beer head or foam settle in certain types of beers or always having a coaster under a pint, they talk about wanting to have a glass or even a correct type of glass for beer, they know the correct temperatures for different beers, and the practicalities involved with the correct pouring of beer, including the correct way to shake beer bottle to get the sediments moving, and the correct way to pour a beer from the tap. *"For me a big part of beer hobbyism is knowing and following the correct ways to drink beer, it's part of the tasting experience. [For example] certain beers are drunk for certain type of glass and you don't mix them"* (Male, 28).

Since the connoisseur hobbyists value quality and enjoyment, following these sometimes lavish practicalities are followed whenever feasible, for example at get-togethers and house parties. At the same time the rituals are not obsessively followed, for example in the case of a more rudimentary setting such as a rock festival or summer cottage, but the knowledge of them forms an important part of the hedonist-connoisseur identity. *"At rock festivals I don't care that much about [beer] temperature or such things, there beer is a basic resource"* (Male, 26).

This hedonist-connoisseur identity is not confined to beer, but also extends to other consumables and sectors of life. The interviewees mentioned having hedonistic and connoisseur traits also with other products and consumables like foods, coffee, whiskey, or wine. *"Many beer hobbyists are also hobbyists in other sectors. … I'm a hobbyist in music, audio equipment, and food"* (Male, 28). The interviewees generally value quality and enjoyment, and are rather completely without a beer or other product than have a mediocre version of it.

The hedonist-connoisseur identity, and rather the consumer behavior and preferences with beers, comes with a high price as craft beers cost much more than bulk beers, with quadruple prices, or even higher. The interviewees noted and accepted this, and like in the case of the explorer-experimenter identity they talked about being the kind of person who is willing to spend a little more money and time on beer to get the high quality and enjoyment. *"I sometimes go and drink just one expensive beer that I have wanted to taste for a long time, that I know is a good beer. I appreciate high quality beer as well as other high quality things. I know that a lot of time and effort has been put into making the artisan beer, it's supposed to be expensive"* (Female, 27).

Here the hobbyists made a clear distinction between themselves and non-hobbyists, as they described how they rather drink a smaller amount of high quality craft beer for the taste and enjoyment, unlike the non-hobbyists who drink a whole box of bulk lager that they get for the same price. The hobbyists described how the non-hobbyists lack the knowledge and sophistication in beer drinking, and how they don't value beer. "*[For non-hobbyists] drinking a can of bulk lager is just a quick performance to be taken care of while the beer is cold, we hobbyists want to enjoy and analyze the beer"* (Male, 31). This juxtaposition is an important part of the hobbyists' identity as it sheds light on what personal characteristics the hobbyists value.

Another interesting part of the interviewees' identity is the relationship with the alcohol in the beer and the subsequent intoxication from drinking. The hobbyists talked about intoxication and drunkenness a bit contradictingly. First of all they emphasized how getting drunk is not important for them and how it is not part of craft beer hobby. Like previously explained, the hobbyists talk about rather drinking just a couple of high quality beers than having too many bulk lagers. Drinking excessive amounts of beer and getting very drunk does not fit with the hobbyists' sophisticated connoisseur-hedonist identity, and here again a distinction between craft beer hobbyists and non-hobbyists was made. The interviewees described how non-hobbyists drink beer only to get drunk, whereas they

themselves have it for the enjoyment. *"When you're buying bulk lager from big breweries you just look for the cheapest beer and buy a lot of it to optimize the amount of the drink. ... For hobbyists drinking [beer] is not about getting drunk. It feels weird that someone can drink three liters of the same beer"* (Female, 27). However, getting lightly intoxicated or tipsy is mentioned as a positive thing and even something the hobbyists are looking for when tasting beers. The pleasant 'buzz' and lowered social inhibitions from alcohol fit with the hedonist identity, and the hobbyists were not afraid to mention it. *"You get a little tipsy [from craft beer drinking and tasting] which is quite nice from time to time, and a notable part of the enjoyment"* (Male, 28).

However, the craft beer hobbyists also confess to drinking bulk lager and getting drunk in certain situations, mostly when they are celebrating, having a night out with friends, or having a party at a summer cottage. Interestingly, the way the hobbyists talk about these events shows them dividing the event or evening into two different stages based on the identity they choose to expose.

For the first part of the evening the hobbyists take the craft beer hobbyist identity, including the hedonist-connoisseur and analyst-critic identities, and drink and taste carefully selected craft beers. This is done until a certain level of drunkenness is reached. *"In the beginning of the evening I drink one to two goodies, but when the beer consumption stars to gain speed [later in the evening] I change to supermarket lager"* (Male, 26).

This is when the hobbyists change to drinking cheaper bulk lager, abandon their craft beer identity, and embrace the otherwise discredited role of non-hobbyist. The interviewees say that after reaching certain level of intoxication they cannot analyze and enjoy the craft beers anymore, so it makes sense to change to cheaper bulk lager that is also easier to chug down. *"Later in the evening craft beer might make way for bulk lager, but that has then nothing to do with beer hobbyism, it's a different phase of the evening"* (Male, 31).

5.1.4 Craft beer hobbyists as teachers and gurus

The fourth interpretative repertoire used by the interviewed craft beer hobbyists is based on all the previous three repertoires or identities. The hobbyists talked about themselves as craft beer teachers and gurus who have a vast knowledge of craft beers and of the correct ways to buy and drink them, and who are willing to share their wisdom, make

recommendations, teach other hobbyists and non-hobbyists the secrets of craft beers, and even act as a guru or authority to whom others come to learn about craft beers.

The teacher identity is evident when the hobbyists talk about tasting and drinking beers with other hobbyists. The interviewees talk about sharing their beer experiences with other hobbyists and friends, telling what beers, beer styles, and breweries are interesting and good, and recommending beers to others. They mention giving these recommendations at the moment of purchase, may it be at the bar or in a store, and basing the recommendations on what they think the other hobbyist might like. *"Usually when someone goes to buy their next beer you tell them if the beer [they are considering] is any good and would you recommend it to them"* (Female, 27). The teacher interpretative repertoire was used also when the interviewees talked about the conversations they have with other hobbyists about beer. They mentioned telling other hobbyists what they think are the most interesting beers sold at the current venue, and what are the trending beer styles that one should try. *"You might teach others what are the beers to like at the moment, what is the cool new thing, for example at the moment it is season and sour style beers"* (Female, 27). This teacher role seemed to be an important one for the hobbyists, and they described the sharing of experiences and knowledge with other hobbyists a central part of the craft beer hobby.

In addition to sharing knowledge with hobbyists, the interviewees talk about sharing their beer expertise with non-hobbyists. The interviewees talk about drinking craft beer at any event or party where alcoholic beverages are consumed and hence they end up quite often drinking craft beers with non-hobbyists present. This creates a setting that brings the hobbyists' teacher identity forward. The interviewees talk about keeping their craft beer bottles or cans purposely visible at parties, or mentioning to others what beer they chose at a bar, to create a conversation about beers. *"I like to drink craft beers from the bottle. That way I can admire the bottle and the nice label for a longer time, and also show others that I have a cool beer. It's a nice conversation starter"* (Male, 26). This happens also with other beer hobbyists, but the conversation that ensues is different. With other hobbyists the conversation is more about exchanging knowledge and trivia, whereas with non-hobbyists it is more about teaching.

The interviewees talk about being the kind of person who likes to talk about beers and teach about them to non-hobbyists and people who are not beer experts. The hobbyists usually tell about the basic beer styles, what tastes should be found in the beer they are currently having, and what they particularly like about the current beer. Usually they also

recommend good or otherwise interesting beers for the non-hobbyists. Often they let other people taste the beer they are currently having. *"Craft beers get attention and someone might ask and wonder what I'm drinking. Usually I offer them a taste of my beer and we end up discussing about the beer"* (Male, 31).

The interviewees enjoy the idea of being able to teach someone something new about beers in general, introducing them into the world of high quality craft beers, getting them to understand that beers are not just beers, getting non-hobbyists to try new beers, and maybe getting them interested in the hobby. *"If I know that someone doesn't appreciate craft beers I could still go and tell them about good beers … and let them taste my beer. It would be great if I could get them to buy and try craft beers. … And they might admit that [craft beer] is pretty good"* (Male, 26).

The interviewees talk about beer hobbyists as gurus to whom people interested in beers want to listen to. The interviewees see themselves as people to whom non-hobbyists or other people who would like to know more about beers come to ask about the topic and learn more. They also see hobbyists as cool and interesting people who others pay attention to. *"Beer hobbyists know what is good and what is not … that's why they're interesting people who are listened to and from whom people want to ask for opinion"* (Male, 26). The interviewees also talk about originally starting the craft beer hobby thanks to a beer guru telling them about beers and letting them taste an interesting beer. They see the hobbyists as important persons who are able to inspire others. *"You become a beer hobbyist through your social circles. You meet a cool beer hobbyist who tells you something about craft beers and you get interested and excited"* (Male, 26).

There is a thin line between positive teaching and negative bragging and patronizing, and the interviewees also mentioned the negative aspects that are associated with beer teaching and guiding. The negative aspects bring a certain stigma to the teacher role, and even though the hobbyists talked about the negative aspects associated with many beer hobbyists, they were quick to mention that they did not apply to themselves. The interviewees claimed that they were not that keen teachers anyway and downplayed their otherwise vast beer knowledge. *"Teaching about beers is out of my league, I'm not that pro in beers so I leave the teaching to others"* (Male, 26). The teacher identity they had for themselves was more of a subtle teacher who is not too pushy, and who knows when their audience wants to learn about beers and when not.

The negative elements of the teacher role included bragging with knowledge and being a know-it-all. The interviewees talked how boasting with knowledge and beer experiences is an unfortunate and somewhat common part of the hobby. *"You meet hobbyists who are just ego tripping, who think they know everything about beer, and in reality nobody can bear their stories"* (Female, 27). This boasting also included making degrading remarks on the drink preferences or behavior of others. *"People have come to me and commented on my beer choice … like 'ugh, how could you choose that beer'"* (Male, 26). This also included pretending to know everything about beers, and not admitting to having any gaps in knowledge. *"People pretend to know everything about the newest and most interesting beers even if you knew nothing about them. A bartender might as them if they know certain brewery and their style, then they are like 'sure, of course I know them' even if they had no idea"* (Female, 27).

Another negative characteristic was patronizing inexperienced beer drinkers or even getting frustrated with them: *"One might think that there is no point in teaching others, 'these fools won't get it anyway'"* (Male, 26). The interviewees also mentioned excluding non-hobbyists from events or social circles. *"Hobbyism excludes people who don't like beer or who are not enthusiasts. … If we go to a beer tasting for example, I know that certain friends won't join us"* (Female, 27).

One of the biggest issues was belittling, depreciating, and looking down on non-hobbyists who drink unsophisticated bulk lager and don't value craft beers. This was mentioned almost by all of the interviewees, and some of them confessed to doing it. *"The belittling of bulk lager drinkers gets inappropriate sometimes. … You look down on other people and think you're so much better than them"* (Male, 26). *"Some experienced beer hobbyists take the joy out of craft beer drinking when they make others feel they're not worthy people if they don't know about beers"* (Female, 27).

This snobbism stigma made some of the interviewees even avoid drinking craft beers in certain settings or company of non-hobbyists. *"I maybe wouldn't drink craft beers with my childhood friends. I guess it's associated with the feeling that I'm better than them since I know what's good quality. Then drinking craft beers would seem like snobbism. Those people live in a completely different world than me. Are you seriously still drinking Upcider, I drunk that when I was 17"* (Female, 27). In these settings the interviewees were ready to abandon their teacher and craft beer hobbyist identity to avoid being an unpleasant snob.

This shows that the identities these consumers have are flexible, and can be used and discarded when convenient. This possibility is further discussed in the following chapter.

6. DISCUSSION

With the empirical data of craft beer hobbyists' identity talk and the interpretations and analysis made from it, the consumer activity, subculture, and market phenomenon can be placed in wider social discussion. The popularity of craft beer hobbyism has boomed, and some explanation for the consumer trend can be offered.

It is discussed that identity talk of craft beer hobbyists is in fact a way to signal localized cultural capital and thus social status, and that the craft beer consumption subculture offers a simple, cheap, and easy-to-access way for contemporary consumers to gain and display cultural capital and social status. These characteristics could be underlying reasons behind the recent booming and trending of craft beer hobbyism.

6.1 Craft beer hobbyism as distinction of social status

Based on the literature review and the interpretation of the interview data, craft beer hobbyists seem to be doing identity work to build an identity with high level of cultural capital, and thus a high level of social status. The high social status is gained by signaling cultural capital and taste with craft beer consumer behavior, and can be heard in the identity talk.

As analyzed in the previous chapter, craft beer hobbyists use four different interpretative repertoires, and take four different subjective positions to build their identity with identity talk. Identity talk, is a form of identity work or "people's engagement in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising their identities" (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010, p. 137). Usually people do identity work to build an identity that is positive and fits with their self-concept (Snow & Anderson, 1987).

Social status is an important thing for individuals, so they are likely to build an identity with high level of social status. When looked at with an interpretative framework (see Moisander & Valtonen, 2006) guided by theories of social status and cultural capital as well as interpretations and understandings of the data, the hobbyists' subjective positions and the practices of the hobby seem to have intersections and commonality with the theories of broad and localized cultural capital.

As discussed in chapter 2, according to Bourdieu (1984; 1986) social status in a contemporary world is gained, signaled, and produced with social resources called capitals. Most interesting of them for the purposes of this study is cultural capital, the "set of socially rare and distinctive tastes, skills, knowledge, and practices" (Holt, 1998, p. 3). Members of the higher class positions signal their status and make a distinction from the lower classes with display of taste, which is the conceptualization of cultural capital, of valued attitudes, behaviors, and preferences (Bourdieu 1984; 1986).

As explained in the literature review, according to Bourdieu (1984) status is gained by consuming objects and using consumption practices that require cultural capital to be understood or appreciated. According to Arnould & Thompson (2005) field-dependent cultural capital and status within consumption subcultures is gained by displaying cultural capital distinct to that subculture.

The first of the interpretative repertoires the hobbyists use in their identity talk is the repertoire of explorer and experimentalist, who is always looking for a new taste, for a new experience, and striving to find the hidden gem, the best beer. This form of identity talk seems to be signaling an exciting attitude of openness and willingness to try something new that is valued in the craft beer hobbyist community. This experimentalism shows embodiment of localized cultural capital (see Bourdieu 1984; 1986) in form of attitudes and preferences. Interviewees talk about visiting and appreciating craft beer locations and events, an example of "participation in high culture events", a component of cultural capital (see Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 153). The hobbyists also mentioned making the tasting and exploring a numbers game with social media apps. The high number of tasted beers that the hobbyists can boast online can be seen as a form of institutionalized cultural capital (see Bourdieu 1984; 1986), a concrete proof of experimentalism, of localized cultural capital. Also ordering a collection of valued beers from abroad can be seen as an objectification of cultural capital (see Bourdieu 1984; 1986) in the form of bottles and cans in the fridge.

The second type of identity talk involved interpretative repertoires of an analyst and a critic. The hobbyists identify with a knowledgeable beer analyst and an acquainted critic, and talk about analyzing and judging beers together with others. This identity talk signaled high level of socially rare knowledge needed in analyzing and evaluating beers, as well as consumption preferences important in the craft beer subculture, and thus a high level of cultural capital (see e.g. Bourdieu 1984; 1986; Holt, 1998). The analyst and critic identity talk and consumer behavior shows a "stock of ideas and concepts acquired from previous

encounters" with beers, that is a form of cultural capital (see Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 153). Also important part of the analyst repertoire is the distinction between analyst hobbyists and the non-hobbyists who just drink beer as beer. This separation of people based on their knowledge is also a characteristic signal of cultural capital (See Bourdieu, 1984; Trigg, 2001).

The third form of identity talk revealed a role of a craft beer hedonist and connoisseur. This identity talk emphasized knowing high quality from bad quality, enjoying high quality, willingness to spend money and time to get high quality, adhering to craft beer consumption practices and rituals, and a clear distinction from non-hobbyists. This socially appreciated taste in the correct high quality beers is an obvious signal of cultural capital, as is the attitude towards spending money and time to get it (see e.g. Bourdieu 1984; 1986). The interviewees also mention having this sophisticated taste in other consumption fields such as foods, coffee, or audio equipment. The hobbyists show "symbolic mastery of social practices" and "performing tasks in culturally acceptable way" when they discuss following the correct craft beer consumption practices. Both of these are indications of cultural capital (see Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p. 153). With the hedonist-connoisseur identity talk discourse the hobbyists again make a distinction between themselves and the non-hobbyists with lower amounts of cultural capital.

The fourth interpretative repertoire the interviewees used and the subjective position they took was that of teacher and a guru. They talked about themselves as having a vast knowledge of craft beers and of the correct ways to drink them, and who want to share their wisdom, make recommendations, and teach others. This identity or role is almost a composite of the previous three, as the role of teacher requires previous knowledge and skills in beers gained by experimenting and analyzing, and an understanding of high quality of the connoisseur. This form of identity talk also signals the highest level of cultural capital, as it signals having knowledge, skills, and behavior important to that subculture, knowledge of different symbols particular to the culture, and skills in using the symbols in inventive ways (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005). This identity shows the guru hobbyist's high cultural capital habitus that has the correct taste incorporated into it (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1986; Holt, 1998).

Also with the teacher role the interviewees talked about the power and status relations of hobbyists and non-hobbyists. They talked about how they are able to rank people in social status based on their taste, how they want to teach people with lesser amounts of cultural capital and taste, and how there is even looking down on and exclusion of the

non-hobbyists. This is signaling of cultural capital, that is at the same time the sign of and the basis for class position (see Bourdieu, 1986), and cultural capital is used as a basis of exclusion to prevent people without taste from entering social groups with high status (see Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Interestingly, the interviewees mentioned sometimes abstaining from craft beers when they are in a certain company of people without taste, as to protect them from realizing their lower status, or maybe to bring themselves more to the level of the group.

The forms of identity talk the interviewees use signal high levels of cultural capital localized to the craft beer subculture. This localized cultural capital also has an effect on the general cultural capital of the hobbyists. Consumption subcultures are interlocked with the broader consumer world (Holt, 1997), and consumers draw localized cultural capital from the consumption fields to gain broader cultural capital. This is done by bringing the correct behaviors of the consumption subculture into attitudes and tastes of individual's habitus (Bourdieu, 1990, see Arsel & Bean, 2013, Holt, 1998).

This means that the craft beer hobbyists are able to bring at least some of their craft beer cultural capital into their general habitus and status. Based on the identity talk of the hobbyists, craft beer hobbyism seems to be a fruitful base for cultivation of cultural capital. The hobbyists are able to show their taste by consuming, knowing, understanding, and enjoying difficult craft beers that are not as easy to drink as light bulk lager beer. They have knowledge in rituals, symbols, and practices, and they attend events that show their knowledge and taste. Most importantly the hobby allows them to make a distinction from people with low cultural capital and status. This can be done at any time they are drinking beers together at almost any place or event. This is when the hobbyists' peers see and notice the field-dependent cultural capital and status the hobbyist has, and thus is the moment when the localized cultural capital is changed to broad cultural capital (see Holt, 1998; Arsel & Thompson, 2011). In short, craft beer hobbyism's form of localized cultural capital is such that it is easily valued, understood, and noticed by people outside of the hobby, and thus easily incorporated into the hobbyists' habitus and converted into general cultural capital.

Different subcultures of consumption have different position in the social hierarchy, and thus the general value of their localized cultural capital is different (Coskuner-Balli & Thompson, 2013). The craft beer consumption subculture has recently gained a relatively high social position in Finland and in other Western countries which is evident from the amount of new hobbyists, beer clubs, beer events, and media buzz around craft beer.

Media and other cultural producers attach niche consumption subcultures to the mainstream and are able to raise subcultures to higher social positions in relation to other subcultures (Arsel & Thompson 2011). This means the localized cultural capital of those subcultures gains value. This seems to have happened with craft beer hobbyism that is trending so fast that almost everybody in Finland has tasted at least once a bitter IPA beer. This also means that the localized cultural capital the hobbyists have gained in the beer subculture is generally more valuable and is easier to attach to beer consumers' general habitus, status, and broad cultural capital.

6.2 Craft beer hobbyism as throwaway elitism

Craft beer hobbyism seems to offer consumers an easy-to-access identity and reference group they can choose to inhabit when they want to show their high social status, and discard when they find something better.

As discussed in the literature review, in modern consumer world consumers take part in multiple different consumption groups at the same time, and do this to build their identity and create feelings of togetherness (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005). It was also discussed how consumers can have multiple fragmented identities based on the social groups they take part in (see Hogg et al., 1995).

Postmodern consumer culture has become fragmented (see e.g. Arnould & Thompson, 2005), and consumer identities have fragmented into numerous and intermittent in such way that the identities "can be purchased as ready-to-wear 'masks'" (Shields, 1992, p. 1). In the book *'Lifestyle Shopping'* Shields (1992) writes, based on classics of Weber, Maffesoli, and Saunders, about the contemporary world that has become a market for different lifestyles, consumption classes, and identities that consumers can decide to pick up based on the current need and desire and discarded when they find something better or more suitable. This has been described as "taking consumer identities on and off like garments" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 236).

Craft beer hobby or consumption subculture is, despite the first impression, quite an easy one to get into. First of all, beer is a cheap commodity. Even the most expensive and rare bottles of beer cost half of the price of a good bottle of wine or whiskey. This means that craft beer hobbyism does not require significant wealth, unlike other high cultural capital hobbies that involve expensive items like high art, valuable collections, watches, or sports cars.

Craft beer is easy to buy and get, it is sold in almost every store and restaurant these days, and the selection is continually growing. It is also sold in convenient bottles and cans that are smaller than wine bottles. This allows for easier tasting of different beers since there is no problem with leftover drink. Numerous new craft beer bars and stores are opening, and new craft beer events are arranged in major cities. This allows for easy access to beers and beer knowledge, and makes it easier to start the hobby.

Craft beer also has an easy-to-approach taste, with easily discerned styles, clearly tasting ingredients, and big differences in colors, opacities, and odors. This makes tasting and analyzing beers easy when compared to wine, that requires years of training to recognize differences in grapes, vintages, or areas. Beer and brewery brands are also distinct and visible compared to wine labels or winery brands, which makes it easy to recognize different beers and choose the desired one in a bar or store.

Lastly, beer already has a place in the Finnish culture, so there is no need to specifically introduce the drink to the lager beer loving consumers. Almost every adult in Finland has drunk beer at least once, and it has a role in Finnish traditions and practices, such as having a beer after sauna or while watching an ice-hockey game. This makes it easy for Finns to develop from a bulk lager drinker to a craft beer hobbyist.

As discussed earlier, taking part in the craft beer subculture offers multiple ways to gain and signal localized cultural capital that can be translated into social status. As craft beer hobbyism is after all quite an easy subculture to get into, it can be argued that it offers an easy and uncomplicated way to access and get the cultural capital and social status the hobbyism offers. Arsel & Thompson (2011) argue that these kinds of easy-to-access subcultures can offer consumers a platform to develop their taste and increase their amount of cultural capital in an environment where the standards of taste are easily learned and understood. This seems to be exactly the case with craft beer hobbyism.

It can thus be argued, that craft beer hobbyism and the identity of a craft beer hobbyist is one of the ‘masks’ or ‘garments’ that the current postmodern marketplace offers consumers to use when they want to show their sophistication, taste, cultural capital, and most importantly belong to the ‘elite’ with social status. Craft beer hobbyism seems to be a mask that is easy to put on by purchasing an inexpensive can of craft beer from the nearby store when consumers want to raise their social class, and equally easy to discard when they want to build a different identity with some other form of consumption or behavior.

This characteristic of craft beer hobbyism could be one of the explanations of its recent rapid growth in popularity as it offers an easy access to the social 'elite' with cultural capital and status. This means that as long as the subculture keeps its high class position in the society new people are going to join it and become hobbyists. If at some point the trendiness or coolness of the subculture dies down, at least some of the hobbyists are probably quick to take off the 'mask' and find another cool subculture.

Similar subcultural features can most likely be found in other trending consumption subcultures and hobbies, such as food enthusiasm, coffee hobbyism, or whiskey hobbyism. The recent prevalence of consumer subcultures that offer convenient and quick access to cultural capital in a form that allows the consumers to quickly change between 'masks' or identities has something to say about our current society.

This phenomenon could reflect the modern (or rather postmodern) consumer society and the present-day consumer identity. According to Hetherington (1992, see Shields 1992, p. 13) the young middle class of today has an identity void, since young people do not share a bourgeois nor a proletarian identity anymore. The consumers of today have abandoned these old identities that were tied to the profession, and are living in a flexible society that allows the changing of profession, education, social group, and identity as wished. Hetherington sees this as a negative thing, since according to him the young middle class is disempowered in the process (Shields, 1992).

According to Maffesoli (1988, 1996, see Arnould & Thompson, 2005, Shields, 1992) the quite recent changes in postmodern economy and marketplace drive consumers to seek their lifestyle in by consuming, and more precisely, by taking part in consumption subcultures and hobbies. At the same time this versatility of the consumer identity is made possible by the easy access to multiple high cultural capital consumption cultures (Maffesoli, 1988, see Shields, 1992), such as the craft beer community, or the microroastery coffee connoisseur community.

Despite the somewhat negative views of scholars on the fragmentation of the consumer marketplace and the consumer identity, I see the possibility for consumers to sporadically take part in consumption subcultures and to wear and take off identities like garments a positive thing. Even though Maffesoli and others (see Shields, 1992) have argued that this might lead to the complete loss of individuality in change for subculturally dictated identities, I think that being able to flexibly change consumer groups, subcultures,

hobbies, sites of connoisseurism, and even identities is not just a fresh and enjoyable experience, also a definitive characteristic of our postmodern capitalist world.

And it tastes good, especially when cold, crisply hoppy, and nicely bubbly.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This study has approached the consumption subculture of Finnish craft beer enthusiasts and examined the identity work and consumer identities of the hobbyists. It has thus made initial academic explorations into this previously unresearched field and brings understanding of the consumption world, its consumption practices and behaviors, and of the craft beer consumers. It has brought forward the types of identities these consumers have and build, and shed some light on how they do it. It also furthers the quite limited research on Finnish alcohol beverage consumers in general.

This study has also looked at the research field of cultural capital and social status in the context of craft beer consumers. It has made incremental contributions into the field by furthering the understanding of the relationship between localized cultural capital and general cultural capital. It has also examined the way cultural capital builds social status, and how localized cultural capital, general cultural capital, and social status can be gained from a consumption subculture. Further it has looked at an interesting case of a high social status consumption subculture that quickly gains popularity, and that the members can use like a 'mask' whenever they see suitable.

There are implications in the findings of this study are for both scholars as well as business practitioners. For scholars this research offers a reference study on craft beer consumer world and identity, as well as localized and general cultural capital. For business practitioners, marketers, and brewers, this study offers a window into the craft beer consumers head. Knowledge of the different consumer behaviors and practices, as well as consumer identities allows for the design and execution of company and production strategies, marketing and communications plans, and new product launches. There could also be implications for understanding the craft beer community better.

This study gives a base for further research into the Finnish and global craft beer market and consumers, as well as studying the transformation systems between localized and general cultural capital. This study also opens up possibilities in other hobbyist subcultures, like coffee, whiskey, food, or perhaps audio equipment.

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